CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE MUGHAL HAREM (1556-1707 A.D)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis "***Cultural Contribution of the Mughal Harem (1556-1707 A.D)***" by **Ms. Majida Khatoon** is her original, research work. I consider it is suitable for submission to the examiners and for the award for the **Ph.D Degree**.

(Prof. Ali Athar)
Supervisor

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Introduction

India is regarded as one of the regions which attained political and cultural power during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The period witnessed an outbreak of cultural activities that India had not seen before. However there were also substantial achievements in various fields outside royal patronage. In India, there were two different religious identities i.e. Hindus and Muslims, both of these communities influenced each other and there was great cultural interaction between them. The Mughals came from a verdant cultural background (Central Asia) having intellectual, literary and artistic achievements. Mughal Emperors themselves were multitalented people and they have major cultural achievement to their credit. It was one of the most important features of the Mughal Empire that the women contributed of not only in the literary field also had but political and artistic achievements to their credit. Like the other publicity of representation, *harem* too became a showcase of Mughal status and sacredness of their women, where they gave enough liberty to their ladies in spite of *purdah* or seclusion to support the cultural activities.

Many writers of the Mughal period used different terms for describing the living place for the women. Usually, it was the *Mahal* or *harem*.[1] Linguistically, the word '*Harem*' originated from the *Arabic* word *harem*, which originally meant a sanctuary but later began to be applied to female apartments as well as to the inmates living therein.[2] More specifically, it refers to the women's quarters. Thus it has the same meaning as the Turkish seraglio and Persian *zanana*. The *harem* portion in the palace of the emperor is called '*Mahal*' both by the chroniclers of the time and the Europeans. Abul Fazl has given it a more appropriate name *Shabistan-i-Iqbal* (the *harem* portion in the palace), or *Shabistan-i-Khas* (for the *harem* quarters in the camp).[3] The *harem* subsequently came to accumulate many more meanings, behind the curtain, not to be seen (*pardeh-giyan*); house where the wives and the household live (*haramsara*); place of sleep (*shabistan,* used as a synonym for *harem*); Mecca, Medina, the area around the *Ka'ba*, the garden of the Prophet Muhammad.[4]

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[1]. Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967, p.76.
Also Mohammad Azhar Ansari, "The Harem of the Great Mughals", in *Islamic Culture,* 34 (January 1960), p.3.

[2]. S.A.I Tirmizi, *Edicts of the Mughal Harem*, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adbiyat-i-Delhi, 1979, p.1, (Introduction). Also K.S. Lal, *The Mughal Harem,* New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988, p. 1.

[3]. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Sir Sayyid Ahmad (ed.), Aligarh: Sir Sayyid Academy, Muslim University, 2005, Vol-I, Persian, p.31.

[4]. Ruby Lal, *Early Mughal World*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.181.

Many modern historians have written about the life of royal Mughal ladies, but the information given by they are very limited about cultural life. Rekha Misra's study '*Woman in Mughal India*' is the first to focus on the aristocratic women covering the reigns of the grand Mughals, which gives us details of their political activities, commercial engagement, education and artistic talents, construction and supervision of buildings, charities and organization of marriage. But her work does not deal with royal women alone. She also focus on common women and gives brief description of royal ladies cultural life. K.S Lal produced the first comprehensive account of '*The Mughal Harem*' the ladies who live there in and their activities. R. Nat's book *'Private life of the Mughals of India'* defines a *harem* that can only be described as fantastical. In his book R. Nath gives a detailed description of *harem* daily life, daily routines, *harem* structure, cuisine, perfumes, addictions and intoxicants, medicine amusement, pastime, and imperial paraphernalia but he doesn't give details of cultural and economic contribution of the royal ladies. Zinat Kausar's '*Muslim women in Medieval India*' had given the social life of Mughal ladies, she gives a detailed account of not only Mughal ladies, but also of common Muslim women of the medieval times. Soma Mukherjee's '*Royal Mughal Ladies and their Contributions*' gives the detailed history of cultural life from the time of Babur to Aurangzeb.

The present study attempts to give analytically detailed description of the life of royal Mughal ladies and their contribution since the time of the Emperor Akbar's reign (1556-1605) to eighteenth century Mughal India. The prominent ladies among them are Gulbadan Begum, Maham Anaga, Hamida Bano Begum, Salima Sultan Begum, Maryam-uz-Zamani, Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahan Ara, Roshan Ara, Zebu-un-Nisa, and Zinat-un-Nisa is discussed herein. In present work we tried to give detailed account of cultural contribution made by royal Mughal ladies who dominated the Mughal Empire. Mughal women were the patrons of various cultural activities. This conception seems to be a very controversial issue that Mughal woman despite leading a secluded life were active participants in cultural activities.

The Mughal *harems* gave shelter to a large number of women of different races, provinces and communities. The *harems* of Babur and Humayun were modest in size, but from Akbar's time onwards the Mughal *harem* became an elaborate affair having a large number of women. The Mughal ladies were almost as remarkable as

their men and in certain cases even more cultivated. These educated and talented women not only contributed in the cultural, social literary, artistic and economic fields but also played a dominating role in politics especially during the18th century. Mughal emperors gave enough liberty to their women in spite of *purdah* or seclusion, to patronize the cultural activities. The Mughal *harem* became the centre for the development of Mughal culture and the ladies lived amidst grandeur and luxury. Foreign travellers provided detailed account of the beauty and splendour of these palaces and *Mahals.* Their magnificence is evident even today when we visit these grand and wonderful edifices of Delhi, Agra, Fatehpu Sikri and Lahore. Even the Mughal gardens in Kashmir, Lahore, Agra and Delhi had beautiful quarters for the *harem* ladies where they rested and stayed.

In the first chapter relates to the ***Administrative Structure of Mughal Harem.*** The *harem* was a big physical shape where a large community of people was systematically organized on the basis of their proximity to the ruler. The *harem* organization of the Mughals was based on the same pattern as the administration of emperor's household. The Mughal camp was a well planned city of canvas, where the emperor's quarters were situated on a raised ground in the middle. The whole royal establishment, household as well as official, shifted to camp with the Emperor. His *harem* moved with him, and so did his artists and artisans, musicians and dancers, even his menagerie and his library. The entire court and the central armed forces moved with him. The ladies were always placed near the emperor's tents according to their ranks and positions in the *harem*, along with their servants and attendants. The pleasure of the *harem* was not the authority of the Mughal emperors alone the nobles also had permission to keep their own *harems*. These were generally designed on the royal patterns. The *harem* of nobles too was known as *Mahal.*

The second chapter entitled ***Literary Contribution of Women of the Harem*** deals with the royal women who were interested in promoting the cause of education. They established *madarsas* and gave stipends to the teacher and students. Thus education in India was not neglected during the medieval period and female education also existed in various forms during that period of time, especially for the higher strata females usually an access to education, through private tuitions at home. There are numerous instances of highly educated women belonging to the royal families and to the aristocratic classes. They were busy in their literary pursuit's right from the

time of Babur. Babur's mother Qutlug-Nigar Khanum and his maternal grandmother Aisan-Daulat were educated ladies and both of them influenced largely in shaping Babur's personality. But the first Mughal lady who left behind her work of literary and historical importance was Babur's daughter Gulbadan Begum, well known for her famous *Humayun Nama*, the biography of her brother Humayun that was written on the request of Akbar himself. Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahan Ara Begum, Zeb-un-Nisa Begum are some of the other leading examples. But we cannot imagine that education for women had been universal even among rich families. The reason may be *purdah* system. Personal factors and individual interest in education and literature did have its impact on the literacy among the females of higher strata.

The third chapter discusses the ***Mughal Women and the Realm of Creativity.*** These ladies have contributed in various arts such as decoration, painting, music, dance, cooking, embroidery and dress designing, perfumes, architecture are some of the field. There were different verities of embroidery such as, *chikan dozi* or *chikan kari, kasheeda, phulkari,* cross stitch and all sort of needle work both cut and wrought works were done by ladies. In the royal *harem* princesses were taught methods of embroidery by certain old woman, known as *'Atun'* among royal ladies, Nur Jahan had proficiency in embroidery and needle work. She has discarded old designs of clothes which were inconvenient to wear and instead designed new patterns. Many new patterns and stitches were invented by Nur Jahan. The ladies of the Mughal *harem* were very fond of the art of decoration and applied it in various aspects of their lives and on festivals and special occasions. Gulbadan Begum in *Humayun Nama* speaks of several occasions when the royal ladies took upon themselves the task of looking into the decoration of their palaces, gardens and surroundings areas.

Fourth chapter deals with the ***Women in Mughal India: Socio-Economic Perspective.*** The chapter is divided in to two parts, first the marriage in which child-marriage, unmatched marriage, widow remarriage, polygamy, dowry, divorce, *purdah,* etc discussed. In second part deals with the economic life of Mughal women in general, trade and commerce was never a very favorite occupation of the ladies. Though a number of royal ladies of the Mughal *harem* did not actively participate in economic field, yet there were distinguished ladies of that time like Jahangir's mother Maryam-uz-Zamani, Nur Jahan Begum and Shahjahan's daughter princess Jahan Ara, who were known for taking participating actively in the trade and commerce.

The fifth and last chapter deals with the ***Political Uncertainties of the 18th Century: Its Impact on the Mughal Harem.*** Many royal Mughal women played dominant role in political arena. It appears from the sources of the eighteenth century that the princes and royal women of the Mughal imperial family exercised considerable influence on the court politics of the *harem*, directly or indirectly throughout the period of Mughal rule, especially during the times of the later Mughals. Ladies of the imperial *harem* have been criticised by the chroniclers for their dirty and selfish role in the politics of the time during the most critical days of the Mughal Empire. Every queen conspired to get her son seated on the throne.

Aurangzeb's second daughter was Zinat-un-Nisa Begum; she took an active interest in the cause of her full brother Azam Shah and after his defeat refused to be reconciled to Bahadur Shah. During the reign of Bahadur Shah, the two senior wives, Mihar Parwar (Mihar-un-Nissa Begum) and Amat-ul-Habib (Aziz-un-Nisa Khanum), took keen interest in the administrative affairs of the state. After the fall of Saiyid brother, Muhammad Shah came increasingly under the influence of his favorites, most of them being women and eunuchs. Muhammad Shah, a man of weak character was in hands of clever and intelligent woman Koki Jiu. Likewise *Malik-i-Zamani* the step mother of the emperor Ahmad Shah played an important role in securing the throne for her step son.

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Chapter- 1

Administrative Structure of Mughal Harem

The Mughal Emperors built an empire and laid the foundations of administrative system. The administrative arrangement of the Mughal *harem* was conceived on the model of a fully fledged government department. The Mughals ruled the country proficiently and gave stable supremacy in the areas under them. The ladies of the royal *harem* lived in elegantly eye-catching and grand quarters provided for them by their Emperor. The residence of these ladies were called *Mahal* but the *Mahal* where the ladies lived usually formed a part of the palace which itself was a part of the fort complex.[1] The Mughal *harems* consisted of a large number of women different races, provinces and communities; it was systematically organized on the base of their closeness to the ruler household. According to Manucci, "there were within the palaces two thousand women of different races".[2] Not only the Muslim women but also Hindu, Rajput and Christian women were in the *harem* of the Mughal Emperors.

The *harems* of Babur and Humayun were modest in dimension, but from Akbar's time on-words the Mughal *harem* became a highly structured affair having a large number of women. *Harem* as an institution was founded and developed, in the right sense of the term, by Akbar and it was under him that it worked systematically and independently like any other department of the government. Whether in a palace or camp, it had a fixed budget and a hierarchy of officials a kitchen, a system of lighting and other equipments. Abul Fazl says that, "his majesty (*Akbar*) has made a large enclosure with five building where he reposes. Though there are five thousand women in his *harem*, mothers, step-mothers, foster mothers, aunts, grandmothers, sisters, wives, daughters, concubines, female relatives, administrators, guards, cooks and menials but he has given to each a separate apartment and a person was appointed to keep an accurate record of *zenana* (women's quarter) life".[3] Apartment which comprised only a portion of the palace, which itself was a part of the fort. Most of

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[1]. Thomas Patric Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam*, New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2004, Vol-I, p.170. *Harem:* The apartments of women in the Muhammadan household.

[2]. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia-do-Mogor*, Eng tr. by William Irvine, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street Government of India, 1907, Vol-II, p.330.
Also Manucci Niccolao, *Memoirs of the Mughal Court*, Michael Edwardes (ed.), London: Folio Society, 1963, p. 33. Meera Nanda, *European Traveler account During the Reigns of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb*, Kurukshetra: Nirmal Book Agency, 1994, p.113.

[3]. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Sir Sayyid Ahmad (ed.), Aligarh: Sir Sayyid Academy, Muslim University, 2005, Persian, pp.31-32. Also Eng tr. by H.Blockmann, Colonel D.C. Phillott (ed.), Delhi: Low Price Publications, First Published, 1927, 1949, Reprint, 2011, Vol-I, pp. 45-47.

women in the *harem* were female slaves or maid-servants who were employed to serve the royal ladies and to maintain the household entertain the Emperor and nobody wanted to show her bad qualities like jealousy, quarrelsome nature or short tempered attitudes. Their mutual relationship with themselves was generally friendly and cordial. But jealousies were prevailing although it was not shown openly. Everybody tried their best. There were also a number of women officials and guards who were selected by the Emperor for taking care of the various needs of the *harem.* The king had a network of spying system within the *harem* and some women and eunuchs acted as spies and kept him informed about the activities of the *harem* women.[4] The splendid living quarters of the royal Mughal ladies are seen in the forts of Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Lahore.

H.Beveridge has given different information in *Ain-i-Akbari* about Akbar's *harem.* According to him there are five thousand women, added to these, their maid and slave-girls and other numberless members of the royal family: the number of *harem* resident would become quite large.[5] According to Beni Prasad, "Jahangir's *harem,* even as a prince, consisted of 300 women".[6] However there are no reliable sources to show that the numbers of ladies were abridged during the reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan and different options are held in this regard, for instance, according to Coryat, "the king (Jahangir) keep a thousand women for his own body among them were three hundred concubines".[7]

The approximate number of ladies kept in the *harem* by Shahjahan is not known. However, it is a point for consideration that between 1653-1705 A. D, the expenses of *harem* increased extra ordinarily, roughly estimated at a little less than a crore. It appears that Shahjahan was liberal in keeping as many women as he liked and maintain them in his *harem* in accordance with the tradition of his predecessors. Manucci in his book thus described Aurangzeb's *harem* and wrote that "In *harem* there were two thousand women of different races who were holding special duties

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4. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal Mughal Ladies and their Contributions,* New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2001, p.16. Also R. Nath, *Private Life of the Mughals of India1526-1803 A.D,* New Delhi: Rupa & co, 2005, p.19.
5. Abul Fazl, *Ain.:.,* Vol-I, p.44.
6. Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir,* Allahabad: Indian Press, 1962, p. 29.
7. Thomas Coryat, *Early Travels in India (1586-1619,* W. Foster (ed.), London: Humphrey, Milford Oxford University Press, 1921, p. 247. Also Thomas Patric Hughes, *A Dictionary...,* Vol-I, p.61. *Concubine:* A slave woman and not a free Muslim woman.

and the concubines also assign their own set of rooms and matrons are placed over them".[8] Thus it becomes clear that the number of ladies in the Mughal *harem* under Aurangzeb had declined enormously, although he did not abolish this institution. This was quite naturally expected from a man like Aurangzeb, popularly known '*Zinda Pir*' (Living Saint), who being religious by heart.[9] Manucci also writes in detail regarding pay and pension of the inmates of the *harem.*[10]

The *harem* ladies were governed by strict system of *purdah*. These ladies generally did not have the freedom to move out of the *harem* as they liked. If at all they went out, their faces were well hidden behind veils. But in the *harem* they could move around as they liked. The *harem* ladies were also provided with various kinds of luxuries and comforts. The daily life in the *harem* was full of happiness. At least, this is the picture that foreign writers like Bernier and Manucci, who once in a while had entrée to the *harem* as physicians, give their accounts. Mughal ladies lived life of great comfort, luxury and materialistic pleasure. These ladies had grand residences very well furnished, with lovely gardens, fountains, tanks and water channels attached to them.[11] Mughal ladies wore gorgeous and expensive clothes made from the fine material[12] and adorned themselves with jewellery from head to toe.[13] The Mughal queen and princesses were never permitted to appear publicly except on visits to relatives and friends when they were accompanied by the Emperor.[14] The Emperor was the only adult male who lived in the *harem*. Terry says, "There lodge none in the

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[8]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.330.

[9]. Thomas Coryat, *Early...*, p. 308.

[10]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.330-31. Also Meera Nanda, *European...*, p.113.

[11]. Francois Bernier, *Travels in The Mughal Empire (1656-1668 A.D)*, Translated and Annoted by Archibald Constable, Second edition Revised by Vincent A. Smith, Delhi: Low Price Publications 1934, Reprint in 1999, pp.267-68. Also William Finch, *Early...*, p. 151. De Leat, *Description of India and Fragment of The Empire of The Great Mughal,* Eng tr. by J. S. Hoyland and Annotated by S.N. Banerjee, Bombay: D.B Taraporevala Sons and Co, 1928, pp. 39-40.

[12]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal Harem*, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988, p.122.

[13]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-III, pp.343-44.

[14]. Nur-ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri,* Eng tr. by Alexander Rogers, Henry Beveridge (ed.), London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1909-1914, Reprint Delhi-2006, Vol-I, p. 241,also Vol-II, p.101. Also Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia 1608-1667*, Sir Richard Carnac Temple (ed.), London: Cambridge, Hakluyt Society, 1907-37, Vol-II, p. 238. Tavernier Jean Baptiste, *Travels in India (1640-1617)*, Eng tr. by V. Ball, New York: Macmillon & Co, 1889, Vol-I, pp.392-93.

king's houses but his women and eunuchs and some little boys which he keeps about him for wicked use".[15]

Many of the foreigners visiting the *Mahal* cities and forts have talked in details about the women's living quarters in these forts palaces. Since no outsiders or male persons were usually allowed inside these palaces and *harem* quarters, most of the information they got about the *Mahals* were they heard from the local people or from the eunuchs or servant women who lived inside these *Mahals* and had regular access to these quarters. According to Bernier his account of "seraglio was based on the information given to him by the *harem* servants, eunuchs etc.[16] that could be ocular observing because he wrote whatever seen and told by the others. He further wrote that he got the chance to get access into *harem* but he was covered with a shawl and was unable to see with his own eyes".[17]

The fort of Agra, for instance, was built over like a city with streets and shops,[18] and was surround by a massive walls encircling it. Inside it was government offices, tents for nobles and quarters for guards. On one side of the palace were the residences of the royal ladies, called *Mahal*, or the enclosure of Abul Fazl, still seen in Agra and many other Mughal citadels. Emperor Akbar had erected many women's apartments at every sixteenth mile from Agra which could accommodate sixteen ladies with servants.[19] During Jahangir's times Pelsaert speaks of the *Mahals* in Agra among these is the palace of the mother of Jahangir as well as three other *Mahals* named respectively *Itwar* (Sunday), *Mangal* (Tuesday) and *Sanichar* (Saturday), in which the king used to sleep on the day denoted by the name, and a fifth, the *Bengali Mahal*, occupied by ladies of varies nations.[20] Shahjahan demolished many of the sandstone structures built by his predecessors in the fort of Agra and Lahore in there palaces constructed marble palaces for the use of royal ladies. At Agra he built edifices like the *Khas Mahal*, the *Shish Mahal*, the *Musamman Burj* as well as the *Anguri Bagh*. In Agra fort, the residence of Begum Saheb (*Jahan Ara*) was situated

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[15]. Edward Terry, *Early...*, p.311

[16]. Bernier, *Travels...*, p. 246.

[17]. Bernier, *Travels...*, p. 267.

[18]. Pelseart Francisco, Jahangir's *India the Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelseart*, Eng tr. by W.H. Moreland and P. Geyal, Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2011, p.4

[19]. De Leat, *Description...*, p.44. Also Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D)*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967, p.77.

[20]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, pp. 3-4.

towards the south of *Khas Mahal*, and was know as (*Aiewane Malka-i-Dauran)*, inside the *harem*, her room was situated between *Shah Burj* and the bedroom of Emperor Shahjahan.[21] The palaces of Begum Saheb and other chaste inmates of the *harem* were gorgeous buildings and cost about seven lacs.[22] To the north of *Khas Mahal* there was the splendid apartment of Roshan Ara Begum, the second of Shahjahan daughters.

It is in Fatehpur Sikri that Akbar built his largest buildings. The most important of the residential building is the double storied *Jodha Bai* palace. On one side is an annexes' for bath and service purposes and on the opposite side a double storied pavilion called the *Hawa Mahal* or (House in Air) is attached. This *Mahal* has commodious apartments. There are two other residences. The one is known as *Mariyam's Mahal* which belongs to Jahangir's Mother, and the other is that of the Rumi or Turkish Sultana Begum, Akbar's first wife.[23] And other ladies of the *harem* were situated to the south-west and south of the *Diwan-i-Khas.*[24]

The fort at Lahore described by Finch, there were three *Mahals* constructed during the reign of Jahangir. The first of these was a small two-storied palace, each story containing "eight faire lodgings for several women, with galleries and windows looking to the river and to the court".[25] The second palace was a large square building called the "*New Moholl*" which could provide accommodation for two hundred women in state, most probably with all their baggage and personal paraphernalia.[26]

The third palace was the stateliest of the three, contrived into contained sixteen several great lodgings, each having faire lodgings, a hall, a small paved court, each her tank and enjoying a little world of pleasure and state to herself; all seated very pleasantly upon the river.[27] The walls in these *Mahals* were decorated with mirrors and pictures and, as Finch noted, "[all] the doors of these chambers are to be

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[21]. Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Badshah Nama,* Mawlawis Kabiruddin and Abdurrahim (ed.), Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1867, Vol-I, Part-II, Persian, p. 241.

[22]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umra,* Eng tr. by H. Beveridge, Revised by Baini Prashad, Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1979, Vol-II, Part-I, p.268.

[23]. Percy Brown, "Monuments of The Mughal Period", in *The Cambridge History of India* (*The Mughal Period*) Sir Richard Burn (ed.), New Delhi: S. Chand & Co, 1963, Vol-IV, pp.541-42.

[24]. V. A Smith, *Akbar the Great Mughal (1542-1605),* Delhi: S. Chand & Co, 1962, p.320.

[25]. William Finch, *Early...*, p.163.

[26]. William Finch, *Early...*, p.164.

[27]. William Finch, *Early...*, p.164.

fastened on the outside and none within".[28] In Lahore the residence of Begum Saheb was a beautiful palace.[29] Besides this, there were several apartments where other ladies of Shahjahan's *harem* were residing.[30] *Zenana Masjid* in Lahore Fort indicates that there were such mosques for ladies in all palaces.[31] In the Allahabad fort the *Zenana* palace still remains intact, with a very impressive verandah.[32] Ajmer fort is a small one, repaired and enlarged in the time of Akbar, but even at first sight it would be clear that it cannot provide separate lodging for many people.[33]

The magnificence and the delicacy of the buildings in the Delhi Fort with its attractive gardens and dazzling exuberance of gold plated walls, is a thing of the past. All the *harem* buildings were destroyed by the ravages of time, except *Imtiyaz* and *Rang Mahals* which, bereft of their grandeur, stand as a naked monument of wanton destruction and loot by the invaders.[34] It is remarkable that under the personal direction of Shahjahan himself, many notable building were constructed in the Delhi Fort. Besides official buildings, there were magnificent female quarters also, where the Emperor and his family lived. Nevertheless, some idea can be formed of the ladies 'palaces', from what remains of them. Of these *Rang Mahal* (painted palace) was lavishly ornate and may be regarded as the crowning jewel of Shahjahan seraglio.[35] This *Rang Mahal* was divided into two palaces, namely *Khas Mahal* and *Imtiyaz Mahal* in the *Khas Mahal* resided the chief Begums of the Emperor. *Imtiyaz Mahal* was situated at the back of the *Diwan-i-Am. Imtiyaz Mahal* when taken together with the bed room was known as *Burj-i-Tela* [36] (The golden chamber). Bernier goes on to describe the *harem* quarters of the Delhi fort as told to him by the eunuchs, that seraglio contains beautiful apartment, were separated on the basis of the rank and

[28]. William Finch, *Early...*, p.163.
[29]. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-II, p.313.
[30]. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-II, p.315.
[31]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.39.
[32]. Percy Brown, *Monument ...*, Vol-VI, p.538.
[33]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama*, Eng tr. by H.Beveridge, Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1977, Vol-II, p. 516.
[34]. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural Life of the Great Mughals* (1526-1707 A D), Jaweed Ashraf (ed.), Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2008, p.94.
[35]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim Women in Medieval India*, New Delhi: Janaki Prakashan, 1992, p.262.
[36]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-II, Part-I, p.267.

income of the females. And apartments were furnished with all luxury of life. Nearly every chamber has its reservoir of running water, terraces, fountains, garden etc.[37]

Since the forts and palaces of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri do not reveal so many living quarters which could have housed 5000 women, we can say that only the *harem* had their separate houses. But living spaces were provided for all *harem* inmates. The ladies of rank in the *harem* also had separate lodgings for their slaves, "of whom there may be 10, or 20, or 100, according to her fortune".[38] Even when they had separate apartments, they did not live in them all alone. There were always many maids and ladies in waiting, slave girls and dancing and singing girls and musicians surrounding them. The lodgings of these *harem* ladies occupied the inner portion of the palace the servants, slave-girls, dancing girls and singing girls were provided humble houses in an area just within the main gate of the fort and this enclosure was known as *chowk*.[39]

Nur Jahan and Jahan Ara Begum had their palaces in Agra, Lahore and Kashmir.[40] *Harems* not only had grand structures, but were very well furnished too. They were usually made of fine marbles, engraved with gold and gems and elegantly decorated. The floor was covered with rich embroidered Persian carpets, thick and soft. There were gorgeous tapestries, elegant and richly decorated furniture, beautiful mirrors, chandeliers, *itardans,* flowerpots, golden lamps and finest works of art decorating the walls.[41] For Mughals, a palace could not be considered complete without its compliment of gardens, fountains and water channels, artificial waterfalls and tanks. Water was drowning every day oxen turning large wheels with many small buckets.[42] Taking this into consideration, Mughal Emperors constructed gardens and tanks with fine fountains playing in them inside the *harem*, where their ladies could reside happily.

On the whole, the Mughal ladies lived amidst splendor and comfort. Foreign travellers tell us in their account, the beauty and splendor of these palaces and *Mahals* is evident to our eyes even today when we see for ourselves these grand and splendid edifices on our visit to the Mughal forts of Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Lahore.

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37. Bernier, *Travels...*, p.267.
38. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p.64.
39. William Finch, *Early ...*, p.183.
40. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p. 45.
41. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, .p.30.
42. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p.66.

Even the Mughal gardens in Kashmir, Lahore, Agra and Delhi had beautiful quarters for the *harem* ladies where they rested and stayed.

The most interesting fact about the position of widow in Mughal *harem* was that they were permitted either to live in *harem* or they could get married or their own will, but the widow of deceased king were not allowed to remarry and they spent their whole life in a garden-enclosure which was being made separately, called *Suhagpura.*[43] It was situated on the bank of Yamuna River at Agra, between the palaces of Wazir Khan and I'tibar Khan and was noticed by Pelsaert, the Dutch factor who was living in the city from 1620 to 1627. It was a large area where the widows (queens and concubines), of the late king were lodged together, in complete segregation and strict seclusion.[44] This shows that the widows of the late king were neither permitted to commit sati nor remarry and these ladies given handsome stipends and spent their rest of life into a separate palace from the royal *harem,* which were reserved for them. Except the mother of the present king a palace reserved separately from the royal *harem.* In the reign of Aurangzeb, at Delhi, royal widows lived in special apartments also known as '*Suhagpura*'.[45]

Noblewomen who came into the *zanana* (women quarter) were often given new titles as a special mark of honor or privilege. Mutual relation among the wives and other ladies of the family was cordial.[46] Babar's oldest sister, Khanzada Begum, who bore the title *Padshah Begum* (1478-1545), was really the first lady of the empire.[47] Queen mothers were greatly venerated. They were given appropriate titles, which made them eminent as far as prestige was concerned. Akbar's mother Hamida Banu Begum was known with the title *Maryam Makani* (Mary of both worlds).[48] And Jahangir's Mother Jodha Bai was known as *Maryam-uz-Zamani* (Mary of the universe).[49] Shahjahan's mother was called *Bilqis Makani,* (The lady of pure abode).[50]

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[43]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p. 263.
Suhagpura: Apartments of the royal widows during the Mughal period were sent into retirement in the Palace known as *Suhagpura.*

[44]. R. Nath, *Private...*, p.26.

[45]. Manucci, *Stora ...*, Vol-II, p.127 (Footnote)

[46]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.266. Also M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.96.

[47]. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the great Mughals, History, Art and Culture,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, p.145.

[48]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.9

[49]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.76.

[50]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.26. Also Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire...*, p.143

Though the mothers of the Mughal Emperors received lofty titles, the queens, sisters and daughters too were recipients of titles. By the middle of the seventeenth century, one from the royal ladies became the favorite of the Emperor, upon whom, more than others, he bestowed his favors. About the giving of titles, Manucci said that the "king are very choosy about giving names to suit the person receiving them".[51] Jahangir's wife Mihrunnisa, of course, was the most famous, receiving the name *Nur Mahal*,[52] (Light of the palace), upon her marriage in 1611 and *Nur Jahan,* (Light of the world), in 1616 after that,[53] Nur-Mahal Begum to be called Nur Jahan Begum".[54] Terry said, "His most beloved wife (when he lived at his court) was called *Noor Mahal,* which signified the light of the court". [55]

Bernier also mentions the many titles of Nur Jahan Begum.[56] Nur Jahan Begum later also received the title of *Padshah Begum.*[57] Jahangir's first wife Man Bai was given the title of *Shah Begum* after she gave birth to his eldest son Khusrau.[58] Shahjahan's wife Arjumand Banu Begum, was given the title *Mumtaz Mahal* [59] (exalted of the palace), and *Malik-i-Jahan,* (the Queen of the world).[60] Mumtaz Mahal participated in the affairs of the state. She was entrusted with the keeping of the Royal Seal. The state documents were sent into the *harem* and it was her right to affix the Royal Seal on them. Tirmizi says; "Mumtaz Mahal as being the Royal-Consort possessed her *hukm* as *hukm-iuliyai aliya mahdi uliya Mumtaz Mahal Begum* along with the seal of a round shape".[61] Shahjahan usually consulted her on personal as well

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[51]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.332-33.

52. Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, *Nobility Under the Great Mughals* (Based on Dhakhiratul Khawanin of Shaikh Farid Bhakkari), Eng tr. by Z.A.Desai, New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan Karol Bagh, 2003, Vol-II, p.14. Also Banarsi Prasad Saksena, *Tarikh-i-Shahjahan,* Urdu tr. by Dr. Sayyid Aijaz Hasan, New Delhi: Taraqi Urdu Board, 1978, p. 48. Also Mohammad Hadi, "Tatimma-i-Waki'at-i Jahangiri", in *History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, Elliot and Dowson, London: Trubner & Co, 1875, Vol-VI, p.398.

[53]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.319. Also Farid Bhakkari, *Nobility...*, Vol-II, p.85.

[54]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.319. Also Farid Bhakkari, *Nobility...*, Vol-II, p.14.

[55]. Edward Terry, *Early...*, p.329.

[56]. Bernier. *Travels...*, p.5.

[57]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.71.

[58]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.56. Also Rakesh Bhan Das & Jarmani Dass (eds), *Maharani: Love Adventures of Indian Maharanis and Princesses*, New Delhi: S.Chand & Co, 1972, p.115.

[59]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.9. Also Abdul Hamid Lahori, "Badshah Nama", in *History of India as.Told by its Own Historians*, Elliot and John Dowson, London: Trubner and Co, 1877, Vol-VII, p.27. Bernier, *Travels...*, p.5n.

[60]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.84. Also James Talboys & Michael Macmillan, *European Travellers in India*, Calcutta: Susil Gupta (India) Limited, 1956, p.89.

[61]. S.A.I. Tirmizi, *Edicts from the Mughal Harem,* Delhi: Idarah-I Adbiyat-I Delhi, 2009, pp.xix, xxi.

as state affairs. Shahjahan was greatly attached to his wife Mumtaz Mahal, and then after her death, to his adorable child Begum Saheb.[62] After Arjumand Banu' death in 1631, Shah Jahan's favourite daughter Jahan Ara was given the palace of honour in the *harem* as well as the title *Sahibat-uz-Zamani,* (Mistress of the universe).[63] Jahan Ara Begum was popularly known as *Begum Saheb,*[64] Also had the title of *Nawwab Aliya* (Her royal highness).[65] The most important title in the *zanana*, however, was that of *Padshah Begum,*[66] the "imperial" or "First lady" of the realm. Aurangzeb's second daughter Zinat-un-Nisa Begum also enjoyed the title of *Padshah Begum.*[67]

Administration

The *harem* was a huge physical shape where a large community of People was systematically organized on the basis of their closeness to the ruler. The Mughal *harem* was elaborately organized; management of a large *harem* was no easy matter. The *harem* organization of the Mughals was based on the same pattern administration of Emperor's household. There were two types of the *harem* staff; firstly females and eunuchs, and secondly male servants who served under the *Khan Saman* outside, such as *Nazirs* and other officers, who also dealt with the *harem* matters. The *harem* was his residence-cum-private office, and it was run like a full-fledged government department, with its own budget, administrator and accountants, headed by the *Mahaldar,* the lady superintendent.[68] Within the *harem* walls a complete staff of females' *harem* officers and eunuchs managed the whole show. Akbar "from the dust of obscurity" elevated many "faithful persons to several ranks in the service of the seraglio".[69] The overall lady attendants from different nationalities' were appointed.

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[62]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.76. Also M. A. Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.96.

[63]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, Eng tr. by Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1947, pp. 34-35.

[64]. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahan Nama*, Eng tr. by A.R.Fuller, W.E.Begley and Z.A.Desai (eds), Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 5, 10 (Prologue). Also Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.9.

[65]. Inayat Khan, *Shahjahan...*, p.5, (Prologue).

[66]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.127.

[67]. Hamid-ud-Din Khan Bahadur, *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, Eng tr. by Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta: Orient Longman Limited, Calcutta, Third edition, 1949, pp.64-65. Also William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), Delhi: Low Price Publication, 1995, Reprint, 2006, Vol-I, p. 2.

[68]. Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal World: Life in India's Last Golden Age,* New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2007, p.130.

[69]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.331. Also Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Persian, p.31-32, Eng tr., Vol-I, p.45.

Categories, official post and Salaries of *harem* ladies

Categories	Posts	Duties	Officials	Salary
High	1.Daroghas 2.Mahaldar	She was an inside management incharge of the *harem*. She was like a female major domo and even acted as an undercover agent in the interest of the Emperor.	Asmat Bano Begum. Dil Aram, Haji Koka, Sati-un-Nisa and Hamida Bano	1028 to1610 rupees
Middle	1.Supervisor 2.Tahwildar	The duty was to keep control over the maid servants and the dancing girls. Tahwildar was incharge of financial records; the Ashraf was female store keeper.	Niyaz Bibi Bano, Qadir Bibi Bano, Gul Sultan Bano, Simtan Bano, Mihr Nigar Bano, Hira Bai Bano, Naval Bai Bano, Manik Bano.	20 to 51 rupees
Low	Banbis, Khawas or Paristar	Their duty was to serve the Emperor, the princes and important *harem* ladies.		2 to 40 rupees

Table: Sources. *Ain-i-Akbari, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri, Ahkam-i-Alamgir*

Each of them was assigned a separate apartment (*Judaganah Manzili*) in the *Mahal* they were divided into diverse section (*Juq*), their duties and offices clearly defined.[70] The *harem* was divided into many sections and each section was placed under a lady as a *Daroghas*. Many other officials all women like *Mahaldar, Mushrif, Tahwildars* and *Begis* are also mentioned by Persian chroniclers.

Broadly speaking the female officers of the *harem* was divided into three main sections, the high, the middling and the low.[71] The first two grades may be counted the superior staff of the *Mahal* whom Manucci calls "*Matrons*".[72] Internal administration of the *harem* was placed under the charge of intelligent and active women called *Daroghas* (superintendent), best translated as matrons by Manucci.[73] These *Daroghas* or commandant, were appointed by the Emperor and it was a very honorable post, which was responsible for the management and discipline of her respective section.[74] Many senior matrons belonged to high families and were well educated, intelligent and capable ladies. Great esteem and importance was attached to the office of *Daroghas* as is evident from the fact that Asmat Begum was one of them. Nur Jahan's mother Asmat Banu Begum once occupied this palace in the royal *harem* and Jahangir writes about her: "of the amiable qualities of the matron (*Qadbanu*) of the family of chastity, what can I write?[75] It was the duty of these *Daroghas* to make sure that all the women did their duties properly and also to keep order in the *harem.*[76] The king was supreme and it was a custom to appoint even sons and daughters of nobles as servants in the *harem.*[77]

Another important post in the *harem* was *Mahaldars* they were selected from among the *Daroghas.*[78] Their real job was to keep the residents of the *harem* under

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[70]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Persian, p.31, Eng tr., Vol-I, p.46. Also M. A. Ansari, "The Harem of The Great Mughals", *in Islamic Culture*, Vol. XXXIV No.1, January, 1960, p.11.

[71]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Persian, Vol-I, p.31, Eng tr, p.46.
M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.98.

[72]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Persian, Vol-I, p.31.
Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.330-31.

[73] Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.330.

[74]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.46. Also S.M. Edwardes and Garrett.H.L.O, *Mughal Rule in India*, London: Oxford University Press, 1930, p.244.

[75]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p.216.

[76]. Fazl Abul, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.46.

[77]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.137.

[78]. K.S. Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.52.

close watch. Sati Khanum and Nur-un-Nisa were from among them.[79] Some of them were so well educated that they were appointed to teach the princess.[80] She informed the king about the activities of the prominent personalities in the *harem*. Reports of the news writers, *Waqia-Nawis* (Public news writer) and *Khufiya-Nawis* (secret news writer) were read out to the king by them. They also sent the replies to these reports as per the king's direction.[81] During Jahangir's time this post was given to a certain lady by the name of Dil-Aram who had nursed Nur Jahan in her childhood. Previously it was held by Haji Koka.[82] In Shahjahan's time the post was given to Sati-un-Nisa.[83] Aurangzeb's time a lady called Hamida Banu was appointed as *Mahaldar* of the *harem* of Prince Muhammad Muazzam later on took the title of Bahadur Shah.[84] Hamida Banu reported to Aurangzeb from Multan saying, 'out of regard for etiquette, it is not allowed by the court regulations that the *Mahaldar* should be present at that time (when the prince was in the company of his ladies). Aurangzeb ordered her not to leave the pen-case and register with the prince under any circumstances.[85] On getting complaint Aurangzeb upheld the lady's power and meted out punishment to his son. Fifty thousand rupees should be taken into short sighted, base-minded and foolish son, as a punishment for this offence.[86] Aurangzeb reposed great trust in his *Mahaldar* Aia-Bega. In his last will and testament he wrote: "Four rupees and two annas, out of the price of the caps sewn by me, are with Aia Bega, the *Mahaldar*. Take the amount and spend it on the shroud of this helpless creature".[87] Naturally, persons employed as matrons were carefully selected. Some of the educated matrons were appointed as instructors to the princesses.[88] She might, in time, even rise up to the respected office of *sadr-i-anas* (chief of women), which had duty for grants of

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79. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.331.
80. Hamid-ud-Din Khan Bahadur, *Ahkam...*, pp.50, 69.
81. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.331.
82. Mutamid Khan, *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri,* Malawis Abdul Hai and Ahmad Ali (eds), Persian, Calcutta: College Press, 1865, p.56.
83. Jadunath Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India,* Calcutta: M.C.Sarkar & Sons, 1919, p.24.
84. Jadunath Sarkar, *Anecdotes of Aurangzeb and Historical Essays,* Calcutta: M.C Sarkar & Sons, 1917, p.65.
85. Hamid-ud-Din Khan Bahadur, *Ahkam...*, p. 64.
86. Hamid-ud-din Khan Bahadur, *Ahkam...*, pp.64-66.
Also Harbans Mukhia, *The Mughals of India,* New Delhi: Blackwell Publishing , 2004, Reprint by Willy India New Delhi, 2009, p.133.
87. Hamid-ud-Din Khan Bahadur, *Ahkam...*, p. 64.
88. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.331.

livelihood and other charitable activities.[89] Thus the royal household was a dynamic place with opportunities for increasing mobility.[90]

In the next grade of *harem* staff comes the Supervisors. They were in charge of the general administration but perhaps their most hard duty was to keep control over maidservants and dancing girls. They were divided into sections, and the Emperor kept them "attentive to their duties".[91] There was a hierarchical set up and, according to the *Ain-i-Akbari,* each of these supervisors or *matrons* of the second category was in charge of a group of subordinates.[92] Manucci confirming this fixes the number of each section at ten. He was well aware of their duties and an obligation, knew some of the *matrons* personally, and mentions the names of several of them. These matrons had names like Niyaz Bibi Banu, Qadir Bibi Banu, Gul Sultan Banu, Simtan Banu, Mihr Nigar Banu, Hira Bai Banu, Naval Bai Banu, etc, and these names were given to them by the Emperor.[93]

Another category of *harem* officials was that of the *Tahwildars* (the treasurer), who were in charge of the accounts of the *harem.* A special staff of writers, cash-keeper, who corresponded direct with the Emperor's treasurer-general, was employed to keep the accounts and check the expenditure.[94] When *harem* women wanted anything within the limit of her salary, she applied to the *Tahwildar.* They send a memorandum to the writer, who checks it, when the general treasurer makes the payment in cash. The writer also makes an estimate of the annual expenses.[95] Abul Fazl continues with further details about the restraints on that since all the inmates of the *harem* were paid salaries and emoluments fixed by the king, the *Tahwildar* maintained a supervisory control over them as she held strings of the purse.[96] The female stroke-keepers of the *harem* were known as *Ashrafs,* and they were in charge of supplies, and accounts.[97]

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[89]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, pp.278, 574.
[90]. Karuna Sharma, "A Visit to the Mughal Harem: Lives of Royal Women", in *South Adia: Journal of South Asian Studies,* n.s., Vol.XXXII, no.2, August 2009, p.161.
[91]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, p.46.
[92]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, P.46.
[93]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...,* p. 53.
[94]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, p .46. Also S.M Edwardes, *Mughal...,* p.244.
[95]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, Persian, pp.31, Eng tr., Vol-I, p.46
[96]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, P.46
[97]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...,* p.38.

Besides these employees, *Tahwildar*, *Mushrif* (accountant), and other such officials were in the intermediate class staff.[98] In the lower grade there was a number of slave women who were either brought from other countries and provinces or presented by others, they did the duties assigned to them, and if necessary also reported to the Emperor all the events which occurred inside the palace. In low category of *harem* staff consisted of slaves and the several girls. They were usually known as *bandis* (slaves Women), and also as *khawas or paristar.*[99] Their duty was to serve the Emperor, the princes and important *harem* ladies. Some times they were even used to satisfy their masters' physical needs. The important and high ranking ladies of the *harem* usually had ten to twelve women servants to look after their personal needs.[100] These *bandis* enjoyed no freedom or rights and their importance in the *harem* lied only when it came to serve the important inmates of the *harem.*

According to Manucci some of the names of these slave girls were *Gulab* (The Rose), *Chameli* (Jasmine), *Nergis* (Tulip), *Kesar* (Saffron), *Kasturi* (Musk), *Gul-i-Badan* (Almond flower), *Gul-Anar* (Pomegranate blossom), *Saloni* (Sweet), *Koil* (bird), *Gulrang* (Flower colored), *Mehndi* (Henna), *Dil-Afroz* (Heart delighting), *Kethi* (Yellowish flower), *Moti* (The pearl), *Mrig Nain* (Gazalle eyed), *Kamal Nain* (Lotus eyed), *Basanti* (Festival spring), *Hira* (Diamond), *Kishmish* (Raisin), *Pista* (Pistachio).[101] The latter category was recruited from the families of the soldiers and other inhabitants of the city.[102] When Manucci visited the Mughal court, he found that usually Kashmiri women were employed to stand at the doors of the chambers and their duty was to "carry away and bring back anything that was necessary".[103] These women remained unveiled, strict discipline was enforced on the *harem* staff, especially on the slaves and servants by the higher officials. Women astrologers (*remmal*) cast horoscopes and satisfied the astrological fancies of the ladies. Once a pearl worth Rs. 1,500 was stolen from the *harem* apartment, the prophecy of a woman astrologer that within two or three days it would be recovered and that a white-

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[98]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, Persian, pp.31-32. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.330-331.

[99]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.31. Also Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, p.15. Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan k Musalman Hukmaran k Ahad k Tamaddni Jalway,* Azamgarh: Ma'araf Press, 1963, Urdu, p.224.

[100]. Manucci, *Memoirs...*, p.33.

[101]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp. 336-38.

[102]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p. 35.

[103]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.352.

skinned woman would place it in the hands of his Majesty came true.[104] The discipline among the servant was maintained rigorously. Any misconduct on their part was punished severely. For instance, one of the woman servants was caught misbehaving with a eunuch. She was "set into an arm pit", her feet into stakes, bare-headed, without food for three days and two nights. The eunuch was "condemned to the elephant."[105]

Eunuchs:

Outside the *harem* surrounded area eunuchs were posted[106]. The word eunuch is derived from the Greek *'eunoukhos'* which literary means bed chamber attendant. Eunuchs were an important institution of the medieval Muslim world; a *harem* without them was unimaginable.[107] Eunuchs neither fully man nor fully women, the eunuch could travel freely throughout the *Mahal* and to the world beyond, thus serving as an accessible conduit of favors and information.[108] The eunuchs highly posted entrance of the *harem*. The eunuch-staff thus gradually not appear attendance inside the *harem*, but posted as guards at the entrance of *zenana*.[109] The seven senior eunuchs were called *Nazirs* (superintendent of an office), and given large allowances. Each of these had a number of other eunuchs who carried out different kinds of duties inside and outside the Mughal. According to Manucci, "there is always one set above the rest who directs and looks after everything that goes on in the *Mahal*".[110]

The chief *Nazir* enjoyed the title of *Aitmad* or *Aitbar khan* (the-trusted lord). One *Aitbar* khan was in the service of Babur and Humayun. In the second years of Akbar's reign he chaperoned Akbar's mother and other Begums from Kabul to Hindustan. As a reward for his devotion to duty, the Emperor appointed him governor of Delhi where he died.[111] Another eunuch with the title of I'timad Khan, his original name Phool Malik and he were in the service of Ser Shah Sur (1545-1553 A.D).

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[104]. Mutamid Khan, *Iqbal...*, Persian, p.193.

[105]. Roe Thomas, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India1615-1619*, William Foster (ed.), London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1926, Vol-I, p.215.

[106]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.350-51.

[107]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.56.

[108]. Ellison Bank Findly, *Nurjahan Empress of Mughal India,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.98.

[109]. Shadab Bano, "Eunuchs in Mughal Household and Court", in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 69th Session Kolkata, 2009, p. 422.

[110]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.350.

[111]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.442.

Salim Shah Sur honored him with the title of Muhammad khan. When Akbar came to the throne, Muhammad Khan entered the service of the Mughal Emperor who entrusted him with the task of improving the finances of the state damaged by Maham Anga. He made him a commander of one thousand and conferred upon him the title of I'timad Khan.[112] Aitbar Khan was the chief eunuch of Jahangir and the rebel prince, (Khusrau) was placed in his charge for some time. A eunuch, Faraz Khan was conferred a *mansab* (ranks) of 15, 00/600 by Jahangir.[113] These eunuchs appear with considerable wealth and position at the court. Perhaps they were allowed to have as many riches, also since ultimately after death the entire property reverted back to the imperial treasury.[114]

Many *Khawaja Saras* (a eunuch) and *Nazirs* thus were men of importance, some of them rose to the position of *Mansabdars* (officer), commanders of armies and governors of *Subahs.* Bakhtawar khan (1698 A.D), superintendent of the eunuch under Aurangzeb, held the rank of 1000. He turned out to be a scholar and a historian and wrote the *Mirt-ul-Alam* and the *Mirat-i-Jahan Numa.* He also prepared an abridgment of the *Tarikh-i-Alfi* and the *Akhbar-ul-Akhiyar.*[115] But they excelled mainly as officers of the *harem* and loyalty elevated them to great heights. According to Manucci, the chief *Nazir* of the seraglio "is highly esteemed by the king". He also accompanied *Mahal* women when they traveled and on their various adventures and expeditions, serving both to protect them from being seen by men while out in public and to transmit messages to them from outsiders comes to call.[116] Pelsaert noted that "the whole management of the *Mahal* is in their [the eunuchs] hands, and they can give or refuse whatever is wanted".[117]

However, whether happy or unhappy they performed their duties with devotion. Good salary, awareness of responsibility, traditional loyalty, resignation to fate, and fear of the king combined to make them good guards of the *harem.* The eunuch Khawaja Niamat saved Emperor Akbar in the *harem* from an attempted

[112]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...,* Vol-II, pp.276-77.
[113]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...,* Vol-II, p.83.
[114]. Shadab Bano, *Eunuchs...,* p.421.
[115]. Bakhtawar Khan, "Mir-at-Alam", in *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Elliot and John Dowson, London: Trubner and Co, 1877, Vol-VII, p.150.
[116]. Manucci, *Storia...,* Vol-II, p.74. Also Bernier, *Travels...,* p.374.
[117]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...,* p.66.

assassination.[118] Akbar treated the eunuchs well.[119] They closed all the gates of the *Mahal* at sunset and sealed, only the principal gate was kept open, and that too 'minutely guarded'.[120] Bernier writes, "Not only to the honor of his (*mughal Emperor's*) house, but even to his personal safety was that entrance into the seraglio carefully guarded".[121] Undoubtedly the seraglio of the size of the Mughal *harem* could be a security hazard if not properly supervised and this responsibility to a large extent devolved on the eunuchs who 'minutely guarded' the door leading to the *harem.*[122] William Finch rightly observed that the door of the *harem* were bolted from outside, for the security of the *harem* was not the responsible of its inmates; it was the responsibility of the female guards and *Khawaja Saras.*[123] Outsiders and strangers were never allowed to step inside the *Mahal* and if any such person was caught, the punishment was very severe. Even female guards of the *harem* had to send all the reports of the *harem* activities to the *Nazir* who finally gave all the reports to the Aitmad Khan who passed it on to the Emperor.

The only men, besides their close relatives, who were allowed to enter the *harem,* were the physicians. As some of the Europeans, particularly Italian adventure Francesco Carreri, English John Freyer, Bernier and Manucci were physicians, they were able to provide some eyewitness accounts. Manucci provided the interesting details of the procedure of entering the *harem.* He stated that "it is the custom in the royal household, when a physician is called within the *Mahal*, for the eunuch to cover his head with cloth, which hangs down to his waist. They then conduct him to the patient's room, and he is taken out in the same manner". On his first entry into the palace, he was also covered in the same way but "by premeditation, I walked as slowly as I could, in spite of the urging of my guides, the eunuchs. The prince having seen this, order them to uncover me that in future I was to be allowed to come in and go out without being covered. He said that the mind of Christians were not filthy like those of Mohammedans".[124] Manucci had further to add "that as these ladies did not have any opportunity to meet any men except their husbands, some deliberately

[118]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-II, p.270.
[119]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-III, pp.514-15.
[120]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.352.
[121]. Bernier, *Travels...*, p. 133.
[122]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.352.
[123]. William Finch, *Early...*, p.165.
[124]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.352-53.

pretended to be ill so that they got the change to meet the physicians, to converse with them and have their pulses felt".[125]

Security of Harem: As a means of further protection contingents of Rajputs were stationed outsides the palace. Many nobles, *Ahadis* and other troops, were also posted along with them.[126] "The *Omrahs* on guard have their table supplied by the king. Every meal is sent to them ready dressed".[127] If any soldier absent himself without a proper excuse, or from laziness, he was find one week's pay, or received "suitable reprimand".[128] In the imperial *harem* was very well guarded; inside the *harem* only women were employed as guards. They were brave, active and faithful and armed with bows and arrows and short daggers. Usually *Habshi* and *Tartar* women[129] and also *Urdu Begis* (Armed Women) were appointed in this post.[130] *Tatar* or *Calmuk* women, armed like Amazons with bows and arrows, and also with swords and daggers. These women had high cheek bones and eyes very far apart; and were always ugly, and often fierce and terrible. The caption of the Tatar guard was also a woman, and ranked with the Amirs of the empire.[131] The most trustworthy and efficient of them were in charge of looking after the safety and security of the Emperor's chamber.[132] Above all these guards was a chief armed woman who supervised their activities. Bibi Fatima held this post in Humayun's *harem.*[133] During the end of the 17th century, Kashmiri women were employed to stand at the doors of the *Mahal.* Manucci says, who "do not veil themselves to anybody' to carry messages or materials into the *harem* or bring them to the door. Their duty was to carry away and bring back anything that was necessary".[134] They kept themselves unveiled.[135] Beside these, a host of women were employed to entertain the women of the seraglio.[136] The women guards like the male were allotted different places of duty

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125. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.354.
126. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.46
127. Bernier, *Travels...*, p.258.
128. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.252.
129. Rekha Misra, *Women...*, p.79.
130. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.47. Also K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.55.
131. James Talboys Wheller & Michael Macmillan, *European...*, p.85.
132. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p. 45-47.
133. Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun Nama*, Eng tr. by Annette, S. Beveridge, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1902, p.50.
134. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.352. Also Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal...*, p.130.
135. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.99.
136. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.99.

inside the *harem* from time to time in a day. *Harem* was guarded by the Rajputs, a custom which originated from Akbar's reign and continued up to the first quarter of the 18th century.[137] They mounted guards outside the palace walls, under their own colors, and marched in, to keep watch over the *harem.*[138] Not in vain had the Mughals palaces guarded by the Rajputs. They defended the honour of the Mughal women in the same manner as of their own. It is amply illustrated by an incident of Aurangzeb's reign Jahan Banu's camp was attacked by the Marathas and was defended with fanatical courage by the Rajputs under Anurudh Singh.[139] For his gallantry and for the sacrifice of his followers he was suitably awarded by the Begum, who took off her own pearl necklace and placed it round the neck of the defender with her own hands, a rare honour undreamt by any servant of the state.[140] Every twenty-four hour the men and women guards of the palace changed their duties.[141] The Rajputs and other nobles mounted guard at five O'clock in the evening and changed duty every twenty-four hours.[142] Likewise, the women guards of the *Mahal* changed guard at the end of the day. "Every day, at about five in the afternoon, they (the women guards) paid respect to her Majesty and departed".[143] Whenever female visitors came to the *Shabistan-i-iqbal*, they had first "to notify their wish to the servants of the seraglio. It was then taken to the *darbar* (a house, a court) who ratified or rejected. When unknown women wanted to enter the seraglio she was searched without respect to position or rank". It was mainly done as a precaution against the entry of men in the dress of women.[144] The king himself was very particular about the security of his *harem*. Thus the *harem* security arrangements were excellent.

The *harem* officers were paid well and regularly; they lived well. Their salaries were sufficiently liberal. The times of Akbar, the *matrons* got so much as 1028 to 1610 rupees a month; junior officials were paid 20 to 50 rupees, while the

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137. S.R.Bakshi and S.R.Sharma (eds), *The Great Mughals (8), Society Culture and Administration in Mughal India,* New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1999, p.123.
138. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, Persian, p. 32, Eng tr., pp.45-46. Also Manucci, *Storia...,* Vol-II, p.332, 352.
139. K.S Lal, The *Mughal...,* p. 60.
140. Jourdain John, *The Journal of John Jourdian (1608-1617),* William Foster (ed.), Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1905, p.163.
141. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, Persian, p.32, Eng tr., p. 45. Also M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...,* p.100.
142. Jourdain John, *The Journal...,* p.163.
143. Jourdain John, *The Journal...,* p.163. Also Bernier, *Travels...,* p.214.
144. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-III, p 825. Also Fother Monserrate, S.J, *The Commentaries,* Eng tr. by J.S. Hoyland and annoted by S.N. Benerjee, Calcutta: Oxford University Pres, 1922, p.79.

lower staff got 2 to 40, "not counting the presents which his Majesty most generously bestows".[145] Even two rupees should not be considered too low a pay as the salary of a clerk too was, in the days of Akbar, two rupees only. Jahangir, for example, "increased the allowances of all the veiled ladies, from 20 percent to 100 percent, according to their condition and relationship".[146] Upon his accession in 1605-but they had more of their own officers to administer it.

Manucci noted that during Shahjahan's reign each lady of rank had a *Nazir,* who was responsible for looking after her property, land and income.[147] Nur Jahan had own *Vakils* (prime minister), who supervised her *jagirs* and the construction of buildings on various her properties,[148] and the Emperor Jahangir's mother, Maryam-uz-zamani had numerous agents in and out of the *harem* appointed to help her oversee her trading activities and to advise her on investments. Under Aurangzeb, the salary of the juniors had risen between 300 to 500 and the lower staff from 50 to 200 rupees.[149] Manucci says "that as compared with the other officers of the empire, the servants of the queens and princesses were more regularly paid and did not endure so much (inconvenience) as the others".[150] Besides, confidants of the king as they were many among them were pampered and made a lot of extra money. Moreover, many of the women of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb had men of note supervising their holdings and accounting for the cash and goods that flowed in and out of the *harem* under their aegis. If such wealth could be accumulated by the lower staff, surely it is a pointer to wards the affluence of the high officials.

According to Shireen Moosvi in her brilliant study of the Mughal economy at the close of the sixteenth century, there were very high salaries-in contrast, an ordinary Mughal cavalryman received a maximum of just thirteen rupees a month under Akbar and they indicate the high status of the lady officers. The total cash stipends that Akbar paid to the *harem* women came to 852,000 rupees a year, excluding the pay of eunuchs.[151] *Harem* salaries rose even higher under later

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145. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.46.
146. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.10.
147. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.350-51.
148. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p.192.
149. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.330.
150. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p. 390.
151. Shireen Moosvi, *The Economy of The Mughal Empire* (A Statistical Study), Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp.249-250

Emperors. According to Manucci "The matrons have generally three, four, or five hundred rupees a month as pay, according to the dignity of the post they occupy".[152] "The servants under their orders have from fifty up to two hundred rupees a month. In addition to these matrons, there are the female superintendents of music and their women players; these have about the same pay more or less, besides the presents they received from princes and princesses".[153]

Travel and Encampment of the Harem

Mughal women's life was not always confined within the four walls of the *Mahal*. A lot of time in their lives was spent in travelling to other parts, both in and outside the country, for various purposes, along with their men folk. Some times the Mughal women accompanied their men in military expeditions, or during exile or in hunting expeditions, or to look after widely scattered family holdings or to go to cooler parts for escaping summer temperatures, or for the simply joy of sightseeing. Proper care was taken of the Mughal women when they went on journeys. Because of the needs of *purda*, however, the manner of travel for a woman of rank was substantially different from that of a man.[154] While most ordinary women traveled about on foot,[155] noble women, and certainly women of the imperial *harem*, traveled by a variety of conveyances, several guards looked after their safety during the journeys, as well as when they encamped. The princesses and great ladies of the seraglio have also different modes of travelling.[156] Some prefer *chaudols*, which are borne on men's shoulders. They are gilt and painted and covered with magnificent silk nets of many colors, enriched with embroidery, fringes and beautiful tassels. Other travel in a stately and close *palki*, gilt and covered over which are also expanded similar silk nets. Some again use capacious litters, suspended between two powerful camels, or between two small elephants.[157]

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[152]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p. 330.

[153]. Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal...*, p.126-127. Also Shireen Moosvi, *The Economy ...*, pp.249-250.

[154]. Findly, *Nurjahan...*, p.107. Also Rekha Misra, *Women ...*, pp.105-108.

[155]. Findly, *Nurjahan...*, p.107.

[156]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-III, p.825. Also Monserrate, *The Commentaries...* p.79.

[157]. Bernier, *Travels ...*, p.371-72. Also Lane Poole Stenley, *Aurangzeb and The Decay of The Mughal Empire*, Delhi: S. Chand & Co, 1964, pp.131-32.

Travel:

Their means of travelling can be divided into two categories. Depending upon distance, namely human carriers and beast of burden, for long land journey they travelled on animal, while for short distances they were carried in litters borne on the shoulders of men or in small carriages with wheels. Animals like elephants, camels, horses' oxen and even donkeys were used for travelling purposes. Poor Muslim women travelled in carts drawn by oxen or donkeys. These carts were covered completely when they travelled.[158] The Emperor mostly adopted a shorter route, started last and travelling fast reached the camping ground first.[159] In the 17th century their retinue increased to big crowd, adopting the form of big procession. When they climbed their elephant the beast was taken into a tent, which was erect for the purpose near the *Shabistan-i-Iqbal*.[160] Mughal ladies usually travelled in *hauda* (in a frame of timbers with windows) set up on the backs of elephants. Elephants, because of their strength and massiveness have always been considered useful for carrying heavy loads, men and baggage over long distances.[161] The *hauda* which was set up on the elephant back was a square structure, richly furnished with gold, covered with screens of gold on every side and a covering over the top for protection which was made "of cloth of silver".[162] Bernier calls the *hauda* as *Mikdembe*r and says that the females seated in the *Mikdember* seems like that they were not of the earth.[163]

These *Mikdembers* could accommodate up to eight women, four on each side[164]. They were latticed and covered with silken nets.[165] The *hauda* was a square constructed "all most richly furnished" with gold, with screens of gold on every side so that the women could look out and a canopy over the top for protection which was made "of cloth of silver".[166] Jahangir estimated that the gold covered *haudas* in use by the imperial family were each worthy Rs.30, 000.[167]

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158. Thavenot and Careri, *Indian Travels of Thavenot and Careri*, Surendra Nath Sen (ed.), New Delhi: The Natonal Archive of India Queensway, 1949, p.246. Also Edward Terry, *Early*..., p.311.
159. Manucci, *Storia*..., Vol-II, p.334.
160. M.A.Ansari, *Socio-Cultural*..., p.101.
161. Monserrate, *The Commentaries*..., p.8.
162. Roe Thomas, *The Embassy*..., Vol-II, p.321.
163. Bernier, *Travels*..., p.372.
164. Bernier, *Travels*..., p.372.
165. Bernier, *Travels*..., p.372.
166. Manucci, *Storia*..., Vol-II, pp.67-68.
167. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-II, p.79.

An excellent description of the *haudas* for women in use by Akbar was given by Monserrate he describes that queen's ride on female elephant covered in howdah with seal and were guarded and escorted by five hundred dignified old men who were of higher rank and were more careful in their job.[168]

Carriages were another kind of conveyances in the Mughal age; they were used for 'long-distance' travels. These carriages were usually drawn by oxen sometimes by bullocks, but usually not by horses.[169] A famous and much more elaborate carriage was the English coach given to Jahangir by Roe in 1616. Jahangir had given this coach to Nur Jahan, who had it "newly covered and trimmed rich".[170] Jahangir liked the coach so much that he got another one made like it which he used for himself.[171] Faster travel for women could be found on horseback[172] either by riding directly on a saddle or by using a horse litter.[173] Horses were useful modes of travel in hilly regions. Camel and camel litters (*Kajawas*) were also used.[174] Gulbadan Begum while describing Humayun's journey and hunting expeditions in Iraq; mentions Hamida Banu enjoyed these sights from a distance in either a camel or a horse litter.[175] Roshan Ara Begum travelled to Kashmir, described by Bernier and Manucci, gives a vivid picture of the *harem* cavalcade on the march in the country. She rode an elephant in close *amari,* which was "blizing with gold and azure". Tatar and Kashmiri female slaves, "fantastically dressed" in *burgas* (veils) and riding "handsome clad horses" marched in her wake, followed by three pairs of elephants carrying *Khajawahs* in which her ladies in waiting sat. Behind the litters came the *palkis* "covered with different nettings of gold threads".[176]

Generally for short distances conveyances, Palanquins (*Palki*), *Doli* and *Chowdols* (*Chandols*) were used by the Muslim ladies, as these were very comfortable. *Palki* (*also called Nalki and Tam Jham*) a kind of covered litter was supported on the shoulders of four bearers[177] (*Kahars*)-two having the front pole

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[168]. Monserrate, *The Commentaries...*, p.79.
[169]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.265.
[170]. Roe Thomas, *The Embassy...*, Vol-II, p.324.
[171]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p. 252.
[172]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.45 (Introduction)
[173]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.169. Also Findly, *Nurjahan...*, p.108.
[174]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.169.
[175]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.169.
[176]. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.101. Also Bernier, *Travels...*, pp.372.373.
[177]. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels ...*, Vol-I, pp.45-46.

attached to the vehicle and two supporting the pole behind. When the journey was long the four bearers were relieved by four others.[178] These *Palki* were closely covered with red cloth, but if the traveler was a rich lady, it was covered with velvet. In case of rain, wax cloth was placed all over the *Palki.*[179] This is also mention *Maasir-i-Jahangiri,* Akbar's mother Maryam Makani was in the fort of Akbarabad at that time. Sitting on a *Palki* she came out to dissuade the prince from his rebellious plans.[180]

Chowdol, a small box like structure having windows in it was carried by two bearers. Being most luxurious conveyance of royal and aristocratic ladies these *Chawdols* were gifted, painted and covered with magnificent silk nets of different colors enriched with embroidery, fringes and beautiful tassels.[181] When the royal ladies had to cross rivers or seas on their journey they went in boats or ships. Gulbadan Begum mentions an occasion when the ladies of Babur's household accompanied him to Dholpur by boat.[182] The boats were luxurious with cushions, awnings and sails.[183]

Various sources about the pilgrimage made to Mecca by some royal ladies during the time of Akbar and this was done by ship.[184] Whenever the royal ladies and other ladies of rank went out, proper arrangements were made to look after their comfort and protection. Whenever these ladies went "young, well-dressed female slave" with a peacock's tail in hand,[185] bursed away the dust and flies and men in

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178. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p. 274.

179. Kausar Zinat, *Muslim...*, p.274.

180. Khwaja Kamgar Husaini, *Maathir-i-Jahangiri*, Azra Alvi (ed.), Aligarh: Centre for Advanced Studies, A.M.U, 1978, p.28.

181. Bernier, *Travels ...*, p.371-72. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.72-73. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels ...*, Vol-II, pp.392-93.

182. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.104.

183. Rumer Gudden, *Gulbadan(Portrait of a Rose Princess at Mughal Court),* New York: Viking Press, 1981, pp.62-64.

> *They were rowed by oarsmen in gallery fashion or else driven*
> *By the heart-shaped paddles as seen in Kashmir today, the boat*
> *Man sitting behind the curtain 'drawing room' of the ladies.*
> *There was no tiller but a helmsman steered with a long oar*
> *And chanted the rhythm.*

184. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.69.n. Also Nizam-ud-din Ahmad Bakhshi, "Tabakat-i-Akbari", in *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians,* Elliot and John Dowson, London: Trubner & Co,1873, Vol-V, pp.391-92.

185. Bernier, *Travels ...*, p.372.

front sprinkled water on the roadways to lay the dust.[186] Thus the ladies of the Mughal *harem* maintained their glory and magnificence even their travelling which was often copied by their noblemen's wives.[187]

Encampment:

The Mughal camp was a well planned city of canvas, they were exceedingly partial to camp life and, therefore a good deal of time was spent in travel. The Mughal camp was like a moving city.[188] The whole royal establishment, household as well as official, shifted to camp with the Emperor, with staff, records and treasury. His *harem* moved with him, and so did his artists and artisans, musicians and dancers, even his menagerie and his library. The entire court and the central armed forces moved with him, along with all those dependent on the court and the army, with countless women and servants.[189] The Emperor and the high nobles travelled with two separate sets of tents which used to be frog leaped. One was meant for camping and other sent ahead in advance to be put up at the next stage of encampment; in this way, there was always a fully constructed camp available for sojourn when the court reached a new spot. According to Abul Fazal, 100 elephants, 500 camels, 400 carts, and 100 bearers were required to transport each set of Akbar's personal camping equipment and paraphernalia.[190] The Mir Manzils (quartermaster of the court) went ahead and selected suitable sites for camp; for each of these two camps were employed a thousand *farrashes* (carpets or mats), five hundred pioneers, one hundred water carriers, fifty carpenters, tent makers, torch bearer, thirty worker in leather and one hundred sweepers.[191]

[186]. Bernier, *Travels* ..., p.372. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.220.
[187]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.212.
[188]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, pp.46-47. Also Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal...*, p.55.
[189]. Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal...*, p.55.
[190]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.49.
[191]. H.K. Naqvi, *History of Mughal Government and Administration,* Delhi: Kanishka Publishing House, 1990, p.57.

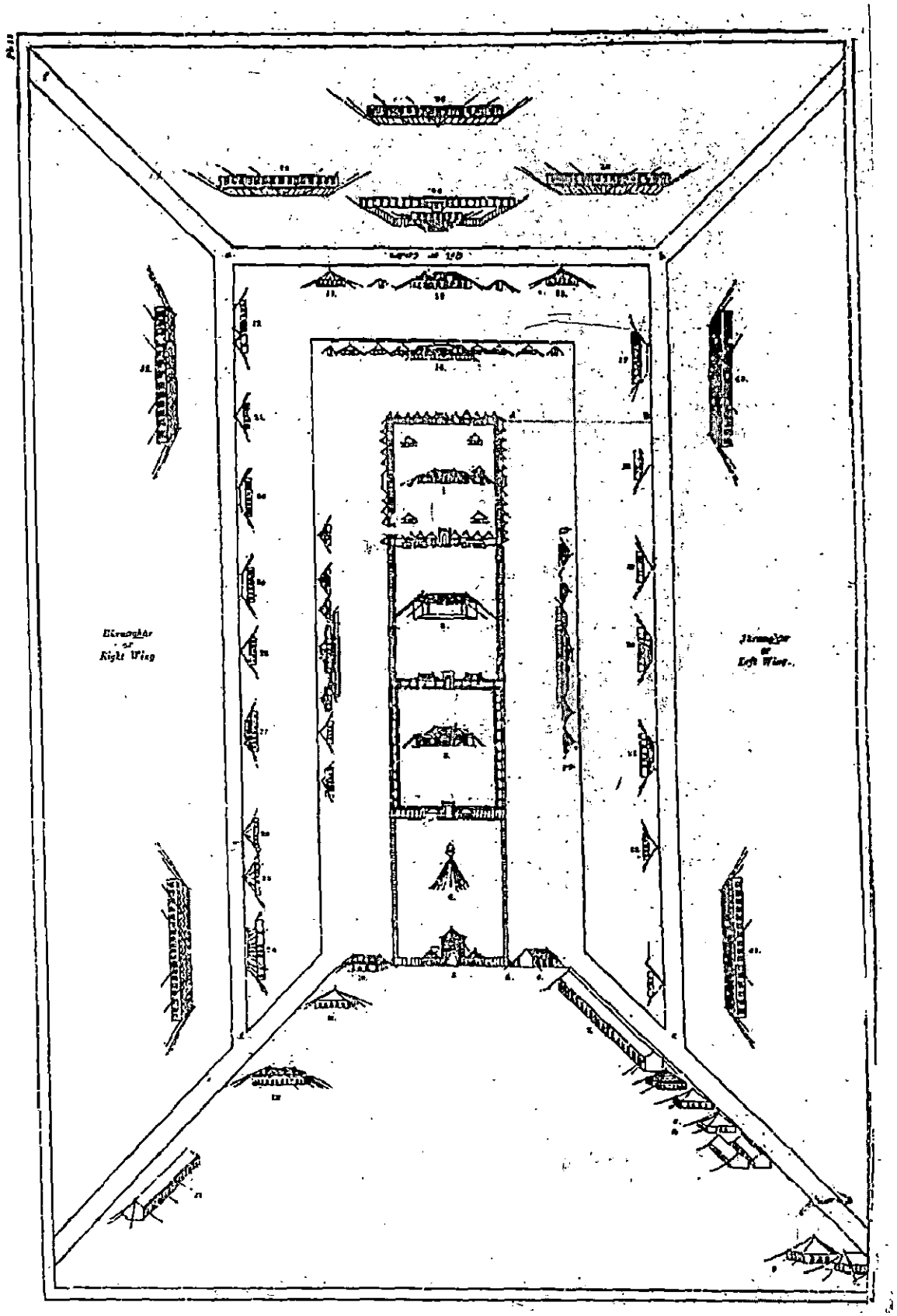

Figure-1.1: Plan of the tents, showing how the emperor's camp was arranged.

H. Blochmann's *Ain-i-Akbari*

When the Emperor moved camp, the first to move out was the royal kitchen. It is the custom of the court when the king is to march the next day, at ten o' clock of the night the royal kitchen should start. The general movement began very early next morning. 'At three o'clock in the morning the march began,' reports Manucci about what he saw in Aurangzeb's camp. 'First went the heavy artillery, which always marches in front, and is drawn up as an avenue through which to enter the next camp.[192]

The royal *harem* travelled by itself in a separate group, staying about three-fourths of a kilometer behind the Emperor. The Begum travelled in covered litters or in cabins mounted on elephants.[193] The ladies were always placed near the Emperor's tents according to their ranks and positions in the *harem*, along with their servants and attendants "each Begum was to encamp with her own establishment and within her own enclosure (*saraparda*)".[194] Bernier reported that "royal ladies encamped on the basis of their rank as separated in the *harem*. The adjacent tent of rich *kanates* was of Begum or Princes and of the royal seraglio. And the mildest tents among them were of the inferior ladies of the *harem*".[195]

Within the imperial quarter a fixed site was allotted to the *Shabistan-i-Khas*, whose area never measured less than 100 square yards. Thus on the march, the royal *harem*, excluding the camp of Emperor's mother, was situated within the *Gulalbar*.[196] Abul Fazal gives a detailed description of the camp with tents erected for holding *Diwan-i-Khass, Diwan-i-Aam*, etc. Behind the *darbar* tents was the seraglio which was even more comfortable and luxurious. Encampment of the *harem* he observed that "outside of it (*i.e. court and offices tents*) twenty four *Chubin raotis* are erected ten yards long and six yards wide, each separated by a canvas, where the favorite women reside".[197] Adjoin these tents, situated in between the *Shabistan-i-khas*, on either side of the forty-yard broad passage, lay two enclosures in which the tent of the *Urdu baigis* (Armed women) and other female servants of the *harem* were pitched.[198] The order of the tents, within this enclose, was arranged "according to the ranks of the

[192]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.364. Also Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal...*, p.56.
[193]. Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal...*, p.60.
[194]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.95n 2.
[195]. Bernier, *Travels ..:*, p.361.
[196]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Persian, p.39, Eng tr., Vol-I, p.47-47.
[197]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Persian, pp.38-49. Eng tr., Vol-I, p.47
[198]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.47. Also M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.96.

ladies concerned". The time of Aurangzeb inside of these tents were covered with hand-painted chintzes decorated with costly hangings of satin embroidered in silver and gold. The floors had cotton mats three inches thick covered with carpets and dotted with brocade bolsters (*masnads*) to lean against.[199]

Mughal camp life a glimpse of the countryside and provided lot of fresh air to the ladies of the seraglio. Else even in 'camp' the *harem* ladies lived as they lived in palaces. Camp life was no way less gay and magnificent than the life in palaces at Delhi or Agra. All festivals, ceremonies and garden parties were held in camp also.[200] In the Mughal camp security was not neglected. If any officer went near the *harem* in camp without permission, he was assaulted by women guards and eunuchs who had complete charge of the seraglio.[201]

Nobles harem

The pleasures of the *harem* were not the authority of the Mughal Emperors only; the nobles also had permission to keep their own *harem*. Which were generally designed on the royal patterns. The *harem* of nobles too was known as *Mahal*. The contemporary Persian chroniclers *Manucci* says that almost all the nobles, both Hindus and Muslims, had their own *harems*, which were same model of the Mughal *harem*; "All the nobles practically followed the same methods as the Emperor for maintaining strict supervision over the inmate of their *harem*".[202]

The *Mahals* of a few great nobles were constructed a fine building, with building materials used of stone and marbles like those of the king : but house of majority of nobles were of inferior construction and with materials like bricks, slaked lime and timber.[203] While many of the royal palaces in the forts of Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Delhi and Lahore are still extant, the houses of most nobles and *mansabdars* built with less durable materials, some having only mud walls and thatch roofs, have disappeared, but their pen picture remains.[204] Both Bernier and Manucci talk about the aristocratic mansions, generally built of bricks and stones, and of the houses built of clay and straw attached to them. Such thatched houses were probably meant for the

[199]. Bernier, *Travels* ..., pp.361-62.
[200]. Abul Fazl, *Ain*..., Persian, p.39, Eng tr., Vol-I, p.45.
[201]. Jadunath Sarkar, *Studies in Aurangzeb's Reign*, Calcutta: Orient Longman Limited, 1989, p.41.
[202]. Manucci, *Storia*..., Vol-II, p.352.
[203]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's*..., p.66.
[204]. Bernier, *Travels*..., p.246. Also Jourdain John, *The Journal*..., pp. 162-63.

attendants and menials of the aristocrats. The houses of petty *Omrahs*, judicial officers, merchants etc. at Delhi were also sometimes built of clay and straw, yet they were very airy and pleasant and most of them having court and gardens. Bernier says that the Kashmiri houses although mostly wooden, were generally beautiful.[205] Terry and Pelsaert write about the houses at Agra and Bernier those of Delhi. Their detailed accounts point to their personal knowledge through visits to the nobles houses to which some of them were regularly invited. This helps to have a clear idea of the way the nobles and ladies lived.

In these *harems*, wives and daughters of different races, caste and creeds were kept. These nobles had generally three or four wives, and some time even more besides concubines.[206] Like the Queens and Princesses, each wife of a noble had separate quarters[207] for herself and her 'maids or slaves; the senior most wife commanded the greatest respect. These wives worshipped their husband like God.[208] The reason was that the whole management of the palace was in their hands and they could give and refuse anything. The nobles visited a particular day, and on such occasion he was welcomed very cordially. The nobles while going out were accompanied by the favorite wife only. The slaves arranged for all kinds of comforts for him. Noble's women lived in the *Mahal* surrounded by high walls, while inside the *harem* beautiful garden and tanks were constructed for their pleasure.[209]

In Mughal period, all the nobles, with a few exceptions, had built fairly large mansions, having mirror like walls, with many halls, rooms, tanks, fountains and gardens, for their ladies. Mohammad Qasim Khan Badakhshi, a nobleman very loyal to Humayun, and promoted to Mihr Bahr (admiral) of India during the reign of Akbar, had constructed a delightful residence in the capital.[210] William Finch says, "The city of Agra" about the time of Jahangir, are one way seven mile in length and, three in breadth....the City lies in the manner of half a moon, bellying land ward on the banks of the Jamuna there are many goodly houses of the nobility, pleasantly overlooking

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[205]. Bernier, *Travels...*, pp.246-398. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-III, p.41. Meera Nanda, *European...*, p.99.
[206]. De Laet, *Description...*, pp.90-91. Also Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p.64.
[207]. De Laet, *Description...*, pp.90-91. Also Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, P.64.
[208]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, pp.64-65.
[209]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p.64. Also De Laet, *Description...*, p.91.
[210]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-II, Part-I, p. 179.

the river.[211] Pelsaert also says that "every one has tried to be close to the river bank, and consequently the water–front is occupied by the costly palaces of the entire famous lord, which make it appear very gay and magnificent".[212]

Jahangir writes that, about houses of the nobles, "Many persons have established buildings of three or four storeys".[213] One of the notable nobles of his times was Asaf Khan, and William Finch describes his palace thus: "on the east side of the castle, hard without the (Fort) wall is the garden of Asaf Khan ...smell, neat, with walks (planted with cypress trees), diverse tanks and jointers".[214] Asaf Khan's palace was "exceedingly well built and costly".[215] But the basic pattern of the *Mahal* of the nobles was the same. One portion of the building formed the *Diwan Khana* or the man's quarters, where the nobleman received friends and suppliants while the greater portion was occupied by their ladies and was called *Zanan Khana*".[216]

In Agra the Houses of Khan-i-Dauran, Nasrat Jang, who had received various mark of favour from Shahjahan was known to the people of the time.[217] Islam Khan Rumi (1669 A.D) in the rank of 5,000 with 5,000 horses had a lofty mansion on the bank of the river Jamuna; this mansion was formerly in the possession of Rustam Khan Daccans[218] During the reign of Aurangzeb, Mustafa Khan Kashi had built a splendid building in Sultanganj in Aurangabad.[219] Mir Jumla, when he died in 1063 A. D. left behind him a lofty building , tank and garden in Hyderabad.[220] Bernier's observations about the houses of the nobles of Delhi are similar to those of Pelsaert at Agra. In these countries residence is considered beautiful if it be large, and if the location be airy and exposed on all side to the wind, particularly to the northern breezes. A good house has its courtyard, gardens, trees, basin of water.[221]

Besides these grand residences of nobles, in Delhi, the mansions of Khan-i-Dauran, Azam Khan, Muzaffar Khan and in Agra the *haveli* of Abdul Rahim Khan-i-

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[211]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.3. Also William Finch, *Early...*, pp.182-185.
[212]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p.2.
[213]. Jahangir, *Tujuk...*, Vol-I, p.3.
[214]. William Finch, *Early...*, p. 165.
[215]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p. 5.
[216]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p. 67.
[217]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.792.
[218]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I. p. 699.
[219]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-II, Part-I, p. 329.
[220]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-II, Part-I, p. 292.
[221]. Bernier, *Travels...*, p.247.

Khana were. According to Tavernier, "in the houses of the nobles the women's apartment house in the centre and it is generally necessary to traverse two or three large courts and a garden or two before reaching there".[222] Pelseart also notes that there were gardens and tank inside the house. In the hot weather, the tanks were filled daily with fresh water. "In this climate water and plants are refreshment and recreation, water is drowning (by oxen) or sometime rose by a wheel".[223] Bernier says that there was handsome under-ground apartments cooled with large fans. These became ideal for repose from noon till the evening. There were no good dwellings without a terrace was a palace for the family to sleep at night.[224]

Nobles' houses were not cluttered with too many items of furniture like tables, stools benches, cupboard, etc.[225] The side walls of the rooms were provided with niches in a variety of shapes, there were exquisite paintings on walls. The ceilings too were gilt and painted.[226] The whole floor was covered with a cotton mattress, four inches in thickness, over which a fine white cloth was spread in the summer and a silk carpet in the winter.

The ladies in the *harems* of the nobles made extensive use of gold and silver, even for their utensils and table service.[227] In the words of Pelsaert, "The *Mahals* are adorned internally, with 'superfluous pomp', ornamental dainties and betraying inflated pride".[228] Even their bedsteads were "lavishly ornamented with gold and silver".[229] The *harem* of the noble was small when compared with that of the king. The ladies of the nobility led a luxurious life. There residences were the picture of magnificence. The wife of Jafar Khan was one of the most magnificent and liberal ladies.[230] Noble women live jointly in the area surround by high walls. Each wife has a separate apartment house for herself and her slaves, of home there may be 10 or 20 or 100, according to her luck: Each has a regular monthly allowance for her expenses (furniture, clothes and jewels) are provided by the husband according to the extent of his liking. Their food comes from one kitchen, but each wife takes it in her personal

222. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels...*, Vol-I, p. 393.
223. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p. 66.
224. Bernier, *Travels ...*, p.257.
225. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p. 47.
226. Bernier, *Travels ...*, p. 247.
227. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p. 67.
228. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p. 64.
229. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p. 67. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p. 87.
230. Rekha Misra, *Women ...*, p. 81.

apartment, for they hate each other in secret, though they seldom or never allow it to be seen, because of their wish to retain the favor of their husband.[231] The practice of keeping concubines was very common both among the royalty and the nobility. These concubines did their best to attract their masters.[232]

Noble's *harems* were like the Emperor, even though the size of their *harems* was smaller, yet they fallowed the Emperor to the security and safety of the inhabitants of their respective *harems*. For the safety they appointed appropriate number of handmaids or slaves, according to their status.[233] The Mughal Emperor employed people of different races in their *harems,* so did the nobleman too like Turks, Kashmiri, Bengali, *Habshi* (Negroes) etc. During the period of Jahangir these eunuchs and Bengali slave girls served the nobles and their wives.[234] The other women servants employed there also strictly guarded the occupants. They were given severe punishment in case of violation of rules in regard to safety and security connected with their *harems.* In noblemen's *harems* many old women and beardless eunuchs were appointed as spies, who kept watch at the doors to prevent unlawful intruders.[235]

Manucci observed that in Delhi many nobles "are very pleased to have their dwellings far from the royal palaces".[236] The reason was the mutual fear and suspicion due to the prevailing atmosphere at the court and intrigues in the royal *harem.* Beside these people enjoyed the pleasure of idleness and Women Company, and many of them avoided attracting the king's attention by living too close to him. Manucci goes so far as to assert that the nobles trained pigeons to obtain intelligence about the movements of the king, what, when and where the king was at a particular time, and had it not been for official and court duties, the nobles would never have bothered to leave their houses at all, in order to enjoy uninterrupted intimacy of their female beauties.[237]

Manucci further writes that these *harems* of the nobles were also great centers of mirth and gaiety, where numerous dancing damsels of uncommon grace and voice

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231. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, pp.64-65.
232. Rekha Misra, *Women ...*, pp. 81-82. Also Thevenot and Careri, *Indian ...*, p. 247.
233. De Laet, *Description...*, pp. 90-91.
234. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p. 65.
235. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p. 270.
236. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp. 467-439.
237. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp. 467-439.

got full opportunities to show their talents.[238] This statement of Manucci is amply supported by *Maasir-i-Alamgiri.*[239] Manucci's account bring out the degrading impact of *harem* life on the rulers and the nobility, in fact, practically sunk in the vices of the Age, and wasted the major portion of its huge wealth over luxury and debauchery.

In short, the noblemen fallowed the pattern of the imperial *harem.* The interiors of their *harems* were guarded by lady guards where as the exterior was in hands of well prepared male guards. Thus the nobles' ladies in side the *harem* lived in splendor and luxury, enjoying all worldly pleasures in their own quarters.

[238]. Manucci, *Storia...,* Vol-II, pp. 9, 336.
[239]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir ...,* p.71.

Chapter: 2

Literary Contribution of Women of the Harem

Mughals were cultured people and fond of acquiring of knowledge. They established *madarsas, maktabs* and centers of higher education in large numbers and also founded libraries. Approximately all the Mughal emperors except Akbar were learned. Babur had given the authority to Sayyid Maqbar Ali, a minister, that one of the duties of the public works department (*Shuhrat-i-Am*) of that ruler's time was the building of schools and colleges.[1] Babur and Jahangir also wrote their autobiographies. Next significant step in the direction of making the Muslim system of education more rationalistic was taken by Humayun. He was also a great scholar, who established a *madarsa* in Delhi, where special arrangements for teaching mathematics, astronomy and geography were made.[2] Akbar attempted reorientation of the educational system by introducing subjects like logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, accountancy, public administration, and agriculture into the existing curriculum.[3] According to Abdul Qadir Badaoni "the emperor recommended a new syllabus".[4] According to Monserrate, "that Akbar gives very great care and attention on the education of the princesses, who are kept rigorously secluded from the sight of men. They are taught to read and write, and trained by matrons".[5] Akbar established a school for girls in Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar set apart certain chambers as a school for their education.[6] It serves as a cogent proof of Akbar's solicitude for the education of the women. Some royal ladies also were interested in promoting the cause of education. They established *madarsas* and gave stipends.

Education continued to flourish under Jahangir who made a rule that the property of any person who died leaving no heir whether he belonging to the capital

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[1]. R.C Majumdar, H.C.Raychaudhuri, and KaliKinKar Datta, *An Advanced History of India, (The Delhi Sultanate and The Mughal Empire),* Third Edition, New York: St Martin's Press, 1967, Part-II, p.571.

[2]. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of medieval Indian culture,* Bombay: Asian Publishing House, 1962, p.79.

[3]. *The Gazetteer of India,* History and Culture, P.N. Chopra (ed.), New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India Patiala House, October 20, 1973, to Asvina 28, 1895, Vol-II, p.431.

[4]. Abdul Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh,* Eng tr. by W.H.Lowe, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat, 2009, Vol-II, pp.306-07.

[5]. Father Monserrate S.J, *The Commentary,* Eng tr. by J.S. Holand and annoted by S.N.Benerjee, Calcutta: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1922, p.203. Also A.L Srivastava, *Akbar the great,* Agra: Shiva Lal Agrawala, 1962-67, and reprint, 1973, Vol-II, p.269.

[6]. N.N Law, *Promotion of learning in India during Muhammadan rule,* forwarded by H.Beveridge, London: Longmans, 1916, p.202. Also S.M Jafar, *Education in Muslim India,* Delhi: Idarah-i Adbiyat-I, Delhi, 1973, p.189.

or outside, used to be appropriated for the cause of education[7] Shahjahan founded a *madarsa* near the *Jama Masjid* in Delhi and provided enough funds for its maintenance.[8] Aurangzeb too like his predecessor was a patron of learning, but his education system was more religious than secular.[9] In the night the women of imperial household read out books to him. Moreover the ladies were quit well-versed in the art of reading and writing. In the "*Maasir-i-Alamgiri*", we find a reference to the education of the females of Aurangzeb's *harem* thus: so too, all the females of his *harem* under his directions learnt the necessary rules and doctrines of religion, and all were engaged in worship of God, reading and transcribing the Quran.[10] After finishing the Quran, Muslim students took lessons in the *Gulistan, Bostan* and poems of Firdausi.[11] Manucci also tells that ladies used to read books like the *'Gulistan'* and the *'Bostan'* written by Shaikh Sadi'Shirazi.[12] Generally, girls, after getting primary education, were put under the tuition of some old educated ladies. Muslim widows usually taught the ladies in their own houses.[13] The education relating to the house hold affairs was also given to them.

Types of Institutions

Two types institution Primary and secondary education. Primary education institutions, known as *maktabs* were generally run by public donations, while rulers or nobles maintained the higher centers of learning. One comes across the following types of institutions during this period: (1) Established and maintained by the rulers or the nobles; (2) Established by individual scholars with the help of public donations and state assistance; (3) Run by individual scholars exclusively without any outside

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7. Ashfaque Ahmad, *System of Education in Medieval India (1556 to 1761 A.D),* New Delhi: Panchsheel Publishers Darya Ganj, 1987, p.15. Also A.L Srivastava, *Medieval Indian culture,* Agra: Shiva Lal Agarwala & Co, 1964, p.106.
8. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses...*, p.86.
9. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural life of the great Mughals 1526-1707*, Jaweed Ashraf (ed.), Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2008, p.112.
10. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri,* Eng tr. by Sarkar. J.N, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal,1947, p.318.
11. Abbas Khan Sarwani, "Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi", in *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Elliot and John Dowson, London: Trubner & Co, 1872, Vol-IV, p.311.
12. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia-do-Mogor*, Eng tr. by William Irvine. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street Publisher the Government of India, 1907, Vol-II, p.331. Also P.N.Ojha, *North Indian Social Life During Mughal Period,* Delhi: Oriental Publishers and Distributors, 1975, p.92.
13. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses...*, p.93. Also S.M Jafar, *Education...*, pp.191-92.

help; (4) Those attached to tombs and financed from their endowments; and (5) Those attached the hospices *(khanqahs)* of Sufi saints.[14]

Secondary education was imparted in mosques, *khanqas* and *dargahs* of celebrated *darweshes* or saints. These institutions were essentially religious in character and the education imparted there included theological and mystical ideas. For the primary and secondary stages of education great importance was laid on the Persian language and sometimes it was made the medium of teaching. Being the official language of the country even the non-Muslim eagerly acquired it. Muslim children began their education at the age of four years, four months and days,[15] when the *maktab* ceremony was usually performed. The ceremony of putting a child to a *maktab* was known as *Bismillahkhani.*[16] The objective of the primary education was to teach the child alphabets and Quran especially the religious prayers. *Maktabs* were a very common sight during the Mughal period.[17] These period girls, like boys received early education in a *maktab,* which was a permanent institute of primary as well elementary education. In these *maktab,*[18] *maulvees*[19] were appointed for two purposes-to guide prayers and to teach children. For the education of girls there was arrangement of separate *maktabs.*[20] But usually, up to the primary standard the girl received their education in the same school where the boy read. Cities and towns and certain villages swarmed with them. Della Valle (arrived at Surat on February 10th, 1623) probably refers to them when he writes that in Jahangir's time there were private schools in every town and village.[21]

Ladies of Muslim nobles could get education only when arrangements for their education were available at home as *purdah* and age stood in their way, and we

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[14]. P.N Chopra, *The Gazetteer...*, Vol-II, p.430.

[15]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama,* Eng tr. by H.Beveridge, New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1979, Vol-I, p.519. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.346-47.

[16]. Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam,* New Delhi: Cosmo publications, 2004, Vol-II, p.43. *Bismillah*: "In the Name of God" An ejaculation frequently used at the beginning of anyundertaking. Also M.L Bhagi, *Medieval Indian Culture and Thought,* Ambala Cant India, 1965, p.357.

[17]. Bakhtawar Khan, "Mirat-i-Jahan Numa", in *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians,* Elliot and Dowson, London: Trubner & Co, 1877, Vol-VII, p.162.

[18]. M.L Bhagi, *Medieval...*, p.360.

[19]. Thomas Patric Hughes, *A Dictionary...*, Vol-I, p.359.
Maulawi: A lord a term generally used for a learned man.

[20]. S.M Jaffar, *Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India,* Peshawar: S. Muhammad Sadiq Khan Publisher First edition, 1939, second, 1950, p.85.

[21]. Della Valle, *The Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India,* Edward Grey (ed.), New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1991, Vol-II, pp.227-28.

may assume that the daughters of the middle-class people received primary education along with the boys in the school. The education of the poor was mostly confined only to the Quran.[22] As for their choice in the selection of subjects and books, the Muslim ladies were very fond of poetry, as per the fashion of the day, the spirit of which came from their Persian lady teachers,[23] who often dictated poems to them. Persian works, as these were not mere books of poetry, but were treated as a treasured sea, full of knowledge and lessons.[24] Besides the Holy Quran and the study of *Tafsir* (Explanation of Quranic verses or Traditions), and *Hadith* (Sayings Prophet Mohammad) the fair sex were taught Persian and Arabic literature, Elementary Arithmetic, Theology, History, Astronomy and Mathematics.[25] Some of them also gained proficiency in the art of calligraphy.[26] Law was also a subject of interest for them.[27] Many Muslim ladies had deep knowledge of medicine and treatment,[28] which shows that either by experience, family background or education they had acquired such knowledge. The art of administration was regarded very important for the ladies of the royal household,[29] and therefore, it was taught to them particularly.

For common women education was not given importance. Education was not encouraged in medieval times and it was an opportunity, confined to the ladies of aristocratic and royal families only. Even then few women got higher education and in most cases the education was limited to the primary level alone. Several social factors like the *purdah* system, Child marriage and the low position that women generally occupied, played a great role in the low level of education among women. Female education was not ignored in Mughal days; but it was limited to princesses and upper class of society. The emperors, nobility and higher classes were keenly interested in imparting higher education to their ladies. Believing that, education made bright the path to the apprehension of truth, they adorned their ladies with the jewels of '*ilm*' (Knowledge). These women had ample opportunities and leisure for intellectual

[22]. P.N Chopra, *Some Aspect of Society and Culture During the Mughal Age 1526-1707,* Agra: Shiva Lal Agrwal & Co, 1955, pp.360-61.

[23]. Jadunath Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India,* Calcutta: M.C.Sarkar & Sons, 1919, p.301.

[24]. Jadunath Sarkar, *Studies* ..., p.301.

[25]. Saqi Mustad khan, *Maasir* ..., p.322.

[26]. S.M Jaffar, *Education...,* p.151.

[27]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara,* Eng tr. by H. Beveridge, Revised annotated by Baini Prashad, Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1979, Vol-I, pp.260-61

[28]. Nur-ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri,* Eng tr. by Alexander Rogers, Henry Beveridge (ed.), Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1909, 1914, Reprint, 2006, Vol-II, pp.213-214.

[29]. S.M Jaffar, *Education...,* pp.191-192.

pursuits. For the education of their girls, well to do classes appointed learned ladies or old men of tried qualities,[30] in their own houses, while highly paid educated matrons and superintendents were appointed in the royal *harem*.[31] Among the inmates of the royal *harem*, those who were very much interested in receiving higher education had the facility of learning from several learned scholars.

There are several instances of highly educated women belonging to the royal families and to the aristocratic classes. They were busy in their literary pursuits right from the time of Babur. Babur's mother Qutlug-Nigar Khanum and his maternal grandmother Aisan-Daulat were educated ladies and they both acted as great influences in shaping Babur's life, which is said to have inherited his artistic and intellectual faculties from them.[32] But first Mughal lady who left behind her work of literary and historical importance was Babur's daughter Gulbadan Begum, well known for her famous *Humayun Nama*. Maham Angah, Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahan Ara Begum, Zeb-un-Nisa Begum are some of the most important examples. But we cannot suppose that education for women had been common even among rich families. The reason may attribute to *purdah* system. Women belonging to the poor section of society were so much engrossed in the problems of livelihood that they found little time for receiving education. Among the privileged classes also personal factors and individual interest in education and literature, did had its impact on the literacy among the females of higher strata.[33]

Gulbadan Begum

Gulbadan Begum (Princess Rose-body) was the daughter of Babur by his wife Dildar-Begum (the heart holding princess), a worthy sister of Humayun and the most respected paternal aunt of the emperor Akbar. She was born somewhere about 1523 A.D.[34] when her father was the lord of Kabul, and she was the child of a man with strength of mind and will power.[35] Her mother was Dildar Begum, but Maham

[30]. P.N Chopra, *Some...*, p.155.

[31]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.330-331.

[32]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal Mughal Ladies and Their Contributions*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2001, p.166

[33]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.165.

[34]. Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun Nama*, Eng tr. by Annette, S. Beveridge, London: Royal Asiatic Society,1902, pp.1-2. Also Rumer Godden, *Gulbadan (Portrait of a rose Princess as Mughal Court)*, New York: Viking Press, 1981, p.9.

[35]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.I (introduction).

Begum, 'the wife of Babur's affection', adopted her.[36] Gulbadan's initial education had started under the supervision of Maham Begum who was the chief lady of the royal household and mother of Babur's eldest son. She had supreme and well-defined rights over other inmates.[37] She witnessed the early difficulties of Babur in his defeats in India and also saw Humayun's ruler-ship, shared the fall and exile of Humayun. She moved with Mughal family time and again, participated in the births, festivities, and together in the grief of deaths and other losses to the family. At the age of seventeen, Gulbadan was married to Khizr Khwaja Khan, a descendent of Changiz Khan. He was also her second cousin.[38] She was an eye-witness of all happenings and miss-happenings of the family. She spent last years of her life under the protection of Akbar. Her father Babur was an educated man, a poet and calligrapher. Her mother Dildar Begum was an accomplished scholar and brother Humayun was a man of literary interest.[39]

Gulbadan Begum was a woman of extraordinary talents, who appeared to have had a superb education. In her person were combined great natural gifts with a rare variety of accomplishments. It is true that she was master of several languages,[40] but she was well talented in Persian and Turkish.[41] She was a lady of poetic nature.[42] As was the fashion of the day, she utilized her leisure time in composing beautiful poems. But, the best expression of Gulbadan's literary achievement is found in her *Humayun Nama,* the memoirs of his brother Humayun. *Humayun Nama*, was written on the request of Akbar himself, in order to help the compilation of *Akbar Namah.*[43] It is true that *Humayun Nama* has no literary pretensions, even though it is of great historical value. Besides the contemporary socio-political life, the cultural life of the Mughals found its best expression in it. The language of the book is very simple. The most important local and first hand account was that of *Humayun Nama.* Therefore

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[36]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp.8-9. Also Godden Rumer, *Gulbadan...*, p.28.

[37]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp.8-9. Also Godden Rumer, *Gulbadan...*, p.28.

[38]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.31. Also Zinat Kausar, *Muslim Women in Medieval India*, Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1992, pp.150-51.

[39]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal Poetry: Its Cultural and Historical Value*, Aligarh: 23 July, 1952, pp.69-73. Also P.N Chopra, *Life and Letters under the Mughals,* New Delhi: Ashajanak Publications, 1976, p.322.

[40]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.152.

[41]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.79.

[42]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.152.

[43]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp.76, 78.

undoubtedly Gulbadan was the first literary gem of the Mughal age.[44] Gulbadan's memoirs are interesting and important because they include matters which do not receive mention in the conventional histories of the time. She describes the family life of Babur and Humayun and the social activities of the royal ladies.[45]

Gulbadan herself notes that around 1587 and 1590 Akbar made the writing of an official history for his empire. Thus, an 'order' had been issued by him and servants of the state and old family members were requested to write down whatever they knew. The order is as fallows:

حکم شده بود که آنچه ازواقعهء فردوس مکانی و حضرت جنّت اشیانی
میدانسته باشید نبو سییه وقتی که حضرت فردوس مکانی ازدارالفنا بدارالبقا
ضر امید ندایں حقیر ہشت سالہ بود و بیان واقع شاید کمترک نجاطر مانده بود
بنا برحکم پاد شاہی آنچه شنیده ونجاطر بود نو شته میشود۔

Tr: 'write down whatever you knew of the doing of Firdaus Makani (Posthumous title for Babur meaning 'dwelling in paradise' and Jannat Ashiyani (Posthumous title for Humayun meaning dwelling in paradise'.[46]

Gulbadan's writing was markedly different from anything that others (servant or other members of court) created at the time. She has not written a *Tarikh* (chronological narration), *Tazkireh* (biography or memoir),[47] *Nameh* (events and biography), *Qanun* (legal text), *Vaqait* (narration of events). But she wrote an *Ahval* which refers to conditions, state, circumstances, or situations.[48] Very less is known of whether she wrote memoirs herself or dictated it to someone, and withers she wrote in *Turki*, her native language, and one finds many *Turki* words in her account. But the time of Humayun's on, the Persian language increased in Mughal court and her verses in Persian.[49] Gulbadan Begum seems to have read some contemporary memoires and chronicles of king like autobiography of his father,

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[44]. S.M Jafar, *Education...*, p.193.

[45]. S.M Burke, *Akbar the Greatest Mogul*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manohar Publisher, 1989, p.182.

[46]. Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun Nama*, Persian Text, Taskand Uzbekistan Raqlan Academe, 1959, p.2. Also Eng tr., p.83. Also Godden Rumer, *Gulbadan...*, pp.9-10.

[47]. F. Steingass, *Persian English Dictionary*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1963, First Edition, 1992, pp.290, 274.

[48]. Steingass, *Persian...*, pp.949, 1380, 1452, 22.

[49]. Ruby Lal, *Rethinking Mughal India Challenge of a Princess' Memoir*, EPS Special Article, January 4.2003, p.8.

Byazid Beyat's "*Tazkireh-i-Humayun va Akbar*" and Khwandamir's, "*Qanun-i-Humayuni*".[50] But, her style of writing is totally different from these accounts.

Gulbadan Bano Begum's *Humayun Nama* is divided into two parts: In the first part of the memoir, she gives details of her father's life, about his wanderings in parts of Afghanistan and Hindustan. Very beautifully she gives details of her father's 'home' life: broad information about his marriage, his wives and children, his relationship with his kith and kin, particularly the senior women of the Mughal family, and so on. The memoir in fact is notable not only for this rare account of household life, but also for the difficulty that the author brings out in those episodes that are discussed in other chroniclers of the time. To take one example : Gulbadan's list of the presents that Babur sent after his initial victory in Hindustan, is an unexpected inventory not only for its detailing of his relatives and other close connections, but also for bringing to life the correct department in the preparation of presents and the mode of accepting them.[51] Her details are quite similar to those provided in Babur's autobiography but she provided a vast detail of those accounts which Babur has mentioned causally and far less interestingly in his account.[52]

The 2nd part of Gulbadan's memoirs start with, Humayun's reign. Here too her account provides about king's expeditions and reconquest of Hindustan, besides these details it provides other kind of historical data which no other source provides. For example, we come to know about the Mughal women lost during wars, Akbar's birth in the harsh conditions of Humayun and Hamida Bano Begum's refugee life. Her details about the expression of royal women's, about how marriages should be done are worth noticing. Gulbadan Bano Begum writes of the varied roles and activities of the women of the Mughal family. In this part (second) dealing with Humayun's reign ends suddenly some three years before Akbar's accession, after a discussion of the event when Humayun blinds his step brother Mirza Kamran. An episode where she discussed about Humayun visits to the women of the family when he was stationed at Agra is worth mentioning and no other sources provides such episodes with so much details as Gulbadan Bano Begum provides us. She paid a lot of attention to the minute's details. Gulbadan paid careful attention to the description of exact rules:

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[50]. Gulbadan, *Humayun*..., p.78.
[51]. Gulbadan, *Humayun*..., pp. 94-96.
[52]. Ruby Lal, *Rethinking*..., p.9.

designated days to the other side of the river i-e. on Tuesdays and Sundays arrangements of the tents of women starting with the senior women's tent in the top row and so on ,or the first arrangement, the manner of visitation, the *adab* of accompaniment (*way to move*) and so forth.[53]

In other episode, another description of the role of the *Haraman* (women of the *harem*) is narrated. Humayun approached Khanzada Begum, his paternal aunt (sister of Babur), he requested her to go to Qndhar to advise Mirza Hindal and Mirza Kamran that since the threat of *Uzbiks &Turkamans* (rival clansman) was great, it was in their best interests to be friends among themselves. When she reached Qandhar, Mirza Kamran urged Khanzada Begum to have the *Khutba* read in his name. She advised him that *Firdaus-Makani* (Babur) had decided to give the throne to Emperor Humayun and as already till now they all should regard him as their superior and should remain in obedience to him.[54] Thus episode descries a woman in the sixteenth century, playing a key role in the reading of the *Khutba*-the decree for the proclamation of a new kingship read in his name.[55]

Thus these extracts, disclose a *harem* far different from that generally presented in other sources, as well as in current academic account. It also tells about the role of the Mughal 'household world' in everyday life. In addition to these, remarkable details provided of the celebration and feasts held by senior women on occasions such as Humayun's accession, and at the occasion of his step brother Mirza Hidal's wedding and we have a lost world of courtly life in camp discussed by Begum in a way that no other chroniclers of the time manage to do. Organization of a feast for Humayun by Dildar Begum (*mother of Hindal*), Humayun's desire to marry Hamida Bano Begum, Mirza Hindal's response to Humayun's desire, Dilbar Begum's firm criticizing of Hindal from his behavior are statements against the assume *be–adbi (*bad behavior, lack of good breeding and refinement*)* of two people.[56] They point to the significance of correct behavior in the matter of looking for brides and making marriages. The account is given in "*Tazkirat-ul-Vaqiat*", memoirs of Humayun

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[53]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp.129-30.

[54]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp.160-62.

[55]. Ruby Lal, "Mughal India:15th to Mid 18th Century", in *Encyclopedia of women and Islamic culture*, Suad Joseph (ed.), Brill Leiden-Boston, 2003, Vol-I, p.68. Also Thomas Patric Hughes, *A Dictionary...*, Vol-I, p.286.

[56]. Steingass, *Persian...*, p.27.

Padshah recorded by his servant, Jawhar Aftabchi, as well as in Gulbadan Bano Begum's, *"Ahwal-i- Humayun Badshah"*, but her information fills in the gap of Jawhar's work.[57] She informs us that Hamida in fact, initially refused to marry Humayun. She refused to Humayun second time as she said "To see king once is lawful, second time it is forbidden. Why should I come again?''Dilbar Begum advised her.' After all you will marry someone. Better then a king who is there?'' Hamida's reply was; ''oh yes, I shall marry someone; but he shall be a man whose collar my hand can touch, and not one whose skirt it does not reach''.[58] It reflects women's choice in matters of marriage and importantly in the *Timurid* Mughal context, their attention to family background and dynasty.[59]

Later when Gulbadan was in Kabul, Humayun used his aunt, Khanzada Begum, to open diplomatic relations with Kamran, and tried to get her to utilize her influence to get some concessions for Humayun himself.[60] From the points raised above, it seems that women were able to use their position, as family members deserving respect, due to age or gender or both, for diplomacy within the family. A study of the roles and positions of the members of this domestic world allows us to understand at greater length the meaning of relationship among Mughal men and women. Different kinds of connection are seen in the involvement of women and men in the making of marriages, in festivities and other celebrations, and the celebration of customs and rituals at births and deaths and more everyday occasions. An examination of these moment and happenings helps us to describe Mughal sociability, expression of motherhood and wife-hood, and also the general notion of duty, loyalty and love.[61]

Humayun Nama is clearly a history of the royal family. The memoirs take us during the difficult set of relations in which women of the nobility were involved in the domestic area. Thus her memoirs explain a very different meanings attaching to family, married life, and household affairs in the sixteenth century world. The vocabulary used to describe the king's kin the kith elaborates the area to which the

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[57]. Jouher, *Tazkerah-al-Vakiat or Private memoirs of the Mughal Emperor Humayun,* Eng tr. by Major Charles Stewart, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat, 2009, pp.30-31

[58]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp.150-51.

[59]. Ruby Lal, *Rethinking...*, p.13.

[60]. Radhika Seshan, *The Public and the Private Gulbadan Begam and Nur Jahan,* (Medieval India Problems and Possibilities), Radhika Seshan (ed.), Jaipur: Rawat Publication, 2006, p.284.

[61]. Ruby Lal, *Rethinking...*, p.15.

differences in the physical, political and cultural condition of the early Mughals affected their domestic relationship.[62] But there are virtually no personal details about Gulbadan's life. The names of her brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, their children, their marriages, are all mentioned.

Gulbadan Banu Begum's gives details about the process and mechanisms of a monarchy in making, its falls and again reaching its peak. Her careful attention paid to the minute details, makes those accounts more richer in meaning and content and thus, her account is incomparable and unique in its own style, and is a alone history written by a Mughal princess, and that too by the senior lady of the *harem*. She was also interested in the collection of valuable books, and possessed a library of her own, in which important books from different parts of the country were kept.[63] Thus, Gulbadan was the only lady whose literary achievements provides us various information about the events of her times which were connected with her father Babur and brother Humayun, their wars and campaigning, the royal ladies, marriage ceremonies, various festivities, births and deaths etc. Actually, her writing is an authentic source of information about the political and social life of the period. Gulbadan Begum also composed verses unfortunately her verses have not been preserved. Only two lines of her verses are found in Mir Mahdi Shirazi's '*Tazkirat-ul-Khawatin'* and H. Beveridge quoted one of her couplets:

هر پری روی کعه اوبعه عاشق خودیارنست

تو یقین میدان کعه هیچ ازعمر بر خود دارنست

Tr:-A beauty that is unfaithful to the lover believe me, she will always find life untrue to her.[64]

Bega Begum

Humayun's wife of his youth, Bega Begum, well known as Haji Begum, was an educated lady, who belonged to Shia sect. She came to India after Babar's death. Gulbadan Begum says that once, during an excursion, Bega Begum, due to some misunderstanding, complained to Humayun that the quarters of she along with Gul-Barg's was not being visited by him for several days.... On being heard Humayun had

[62]. Ruby Lal, *Rethinking...*, p.15.
[63]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.76. Also S.M Jaffar, *Education...*, p.193.
[64]. Quoted in P.N Chopra, *Life and ...*, p.322.

directed them to write letters[65] to him if it was so felt; and she wrote for the second time at this issue and got settled the matter. This shows that she was quite conversant on the technique of writing and could turn the emperor's heart at her will. Bega Begum had profound knowledge of medicine and treatment also.[66]

Akbar's mother Hamida Banu Begum was also an educated woman. Akbar's Nurse Maham Anaga was also educationally inclined and was a patron of education. Akbar had educated wives too. The most outstanding royal lady during Akbar's time, who kept herself occupied in literary pursuits, was one of his wives Salima Sultana Begum.[67]

Hamida Bano Begum

Hamida Bano Begum (Maryam Makani) was a daughter of Hindal's preceptor, Mir Baba Dost.[68] She was a highly educated lady and was expert in the art of conversation. She was famous for her sharp understanding, warm heart and elevated sentiments.[69] She was intelligent and had profound knowledge of Islamic doctrines. *Maathir-ul-Umarah* refers to an important incident when Akbar's tutor Mullah Abdun-Nabi tore off Akbar's saffron colored dress in open court only because it was not permissible in Islam. Akbar felt humiliated and he complained about it to his mother, Hamida Bano Begum. But in response she replied, 'My son, don't be vexed, "This will be a cause of salvation to you on the last day. Till the day of the Resurrection they will tell how a poor Mullah dealt with the king of the age and how the king of happy augury submitted".[70]

Maham Anaga

Maham Anaga the wet nurse of Emperor Akbar was a highly educated and distinguished lady.[71] She was the wife of Nadim Koka, and mother of Baqi and Adham Koka. Maham Anaga, by abundance of her understanding and the straightness of her loyalty had much influence over Akbar. She was retained in charge

[65]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, Persian, pp.37-38
[66]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-III, pp.107-108.
[67]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.169.
[68]. Gulbadan *Humayun...*, p.149.
[69]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal ...*, p.169. Also Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses...*, p.92.
[70]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara,* Mavlavi Abdul Haii and Mavlavi Mirza Ashraf (eds.), Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1891, Persian, Vol-II, Part-I, pp. 561-62.
[71]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.59. Also Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.154.

of the *harem* of Akbar till her death.[72] She was keenly interested in the promotion of learning, patronized education with heart and soul. She built a collage (*madarsa*) at Delhi known as *Khair-ul-manzil*, which had a mosque attached to it.[73] Badauni called it *Begum Madarsah.*[74] She was not only a great lover of learning, but a remarkable promoter of education as well. She was one of those who believed that the greatest service to the people is to educate them.

Salima Sultana Begum

Salima Sultana Begum was the daughter of Mirza Nurud-din Muhammad Chanqanini.[75] Her mother was one of Babur's daughters, probably Gul-rukh Begum, or as some sources calls her Gulbarg Begum .[76] She was Humayun's niece and Akbar's cousin. In1557 A.D. (965 H.) she was married to Bairam Khan-i-Khanan. After the murder of Bairam in 1560 A.D. (968 H) Salima Sultana was married by Akbar. She was a woman of intelligent and literary accomplishments. She had good knowledge of the Persian language and came to be known as a poetess.[77] She inherited her mother's literary taste. Her mother Gul-Rukh was a highly educated lady who had a poetic vain and composed a number of verses. One of her famous verses is as follows:

ہیگچہ آن شوخِ گلِ رُخسار بے اغیار نسیت

راست بوداست آنکہ در عالم گل بے خار نسیت۔

Tr: 'The rose-cheeked, active beloved, never lives without others. It is true that in the world there is none a rose flower without thorns[78].

Her verses were of high standard and she ranked among the famous verse composers of her time. Salima Begum wrote her verses in Persian with in the pen name of *'Makhfi'* (the concealed or hidden one).[79] Her famous verse runs as follows:-

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[72]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-II, p.86. Also Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.146.

[73]. Sayyad Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Bazm-i-Taimuriya,* Azamgarh: Matba Ma'araf, 1948, (Urdu), p.441.Also Zinat kausar, *Muslim...*, p.154. J.M. Shelat, *Akbar*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1959, Vol-II, pp.341-42. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses...*, p. 82. N.N Law, *Promotion...*, p.201.

[74]. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, p.60.

[75]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.57. Also Shah Nawas Khan, *Maathir...*, Persian Vol-I, Part-I, p.375.

[76]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp. 276-277 (translator's Note).
Also Abul Fazal, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Eng tr. by H.Blochmann, Colonel D.C. Phillott (ed.), Delhi: Low Price Publications, First Published, 1927, 1949, Reprint, 2011, Vol-I, pp.321-22.

[77]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.58.

[78]. Sayyad Sahabuddin, *Bazm...*, p.439.

کا کلت رامن زمستیی رشتعہء جان گفتعہ ام

مست بردم زین سبب حرف پریشان گفتعہ ام

Tr:-In my passion, I called they lock the "thread of life", I was wild and so uttered such an expression.[80]

Her collection of poem, called '*Diwan*' is of very high rank and still occupies an important place in Persian literature. Salima Sultana Begum not only composed verses, but was also known to have been a collector of books' and besides had her own library,[81] and there were a number of books written by her. Certain important manuscripts like the one of Duval Rani Khizr Khan, by the poet Amir Khusrau Dihlavi in the library of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, once belonged to Salima Sultana Begum.[82] She acted as the superintendent of the palace school at Fatehpur Sikri and in order to be able to do her work more efficiently.[83]

Thus, Salima Sultana Begum, with her literary talents, achievement and intelligence, without doubt enriched art and culture of the Mughal times and engraved a place for herself among the prominent ladies of the Mughal household.

Janan Begum

Janan Begum was the most beautiful and highly educated daughter of Akbar's courtier Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, son of Bairam Khan. She was married to Prince Danyal towards the end of 1598 A.D. (1006 A.H.).[84] She was very generous and a great patron of learned scholars. She had gained proficiency in the Holy Quran,[85] and wrote a commentary on it, she also a poetess.[86] For this Akbar rewarded her with 50,000 (Fifty thousand) Dinars.[87]

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79. Shah Nawas Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.371. Also Gulbadan, *Humayun...*,p.279, Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol.I, p.322. J.M Shelat, *Akbar...*, Vol-II, p.341-342.

80. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-Al-Lubab,* Maulavi Kabir-Al-Din Ahmad and Woolseley Haig (eds.), Persian, Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1869, Part-I, p.277. Also Shah Nawas Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.371.

81. Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D),* NewDelhi: Munishiram Manoharlal, 1967, p.89.

82. Stuart Cary Welch, *Indian Art and Culture1300-1900,* New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, from September14, 1985 to January 5,1986, p.153

83. S.K Banerji, *Humayun Badshah,* Lucknow: Maxwell Company, 1941, Vol-II, p. 324.

84. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.322. Also Sayyad Sahabuddin, *Bazm...*, p.442.

85. Sayyid Sahabuddin, *Hindustan k Musalman Hukmaran k Ahad k Tamaddni Jalway,* Azamgarh: Ma'araf Press, 1963, Urdu, p.221.

Dai Lado

Dai Lado was the wet nurse of Emperor Jahangir. She was a great patron of learning. She founded a school at Lahore which was presided over by a learned scholar, named Maulvee Asmatullah.[88] After her death the school, with the mosque attached to it, continued to be a centre of learning and existed till the downfall of Mughal dynasty.[89]

Nur Jahan

Nur Jahan the daughter of Mirza Ghiyas Beg, a Persian noble who come to India in search of fortune during the time of Emperor Akbar. Mehr-un-Nisa spent her happy childhood at her father's home. She grew up to be a beautiful, intelligent, educated and talented girl. On occasion of *Nauroz* in 1611 A.D. Jahangir saw Mehr-un-Nisa and fell head over heels in love with her.[90] Two months after this meeting, the two of them got married on 25th May, 1611 A.D. Mehr-un-Nisa was now called *Nur Mahal* (light of the palace). In 1616 A.D. Jahangir gave her the title of *Nur Jahan* (*light* of the world).[91] In 1622 A.D, she won the title of '*Padshah Begum*' (the first lady of the realm).[92] Nur Jahan was a learned Mughal women of Jahangir's time was highly cultured, educated, talented and exceedingly beautiful wife of Jahangir was a lady of literary excellence. She was gifted with a poetic nature and wrote extempore verses.[93] She was a highly educated lady with a mind singularly gifted and able. She was skilled in political matters and was equally gifted in literature too. By these unique abilities she blossomed like a lovely flower, and her mind unfolded with the beauty of her face and figure. She was well-versed in Persian and Arabic literature.[94]

In the company of Jahangir, Nur Jahan Begum began composing sober and thought provoking poetry. Poetry was a passion with Nur Jahan and she composed

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[86]. Sayyad Sahabuddin, *Bazm...*, P.442.

[87]. A.M.A Shustry, *Outlines of Islamic Culture,* Mysore: Published by the author, 1938, Vol-II, p.774.

[88]. M.L Bhagi, *Medieval...*, p.353.

[89]. Zinat kausar, *Muslim...*, p.156.

[90]. Mutamid Khan, *Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri,* Malawis Abdul Haii and Ahmad Ali (eds.), Calcutta: College Press, 1865, Persian, p.56. Also Mutamid Khan, "Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri", in *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, Elliot and Dowson, London: Trubner and Co, 1875, Vol-VI, pp.404-405.

[91]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.319.

[92]. R.P Tripathi, *Rise and fall of the Mughal Empire,* Allahabad: Central Book Depo, 1960, p.421.

[93]. S.M Jaffar, *Education ...*, p.194. Also N.N Law, *Promotion...*, p.202.

[94]. Zinat kausar, *Muslim...*, p.156.

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verses in the Persian language which carried natural outflow of her emotions, dependency, suffering and Sufi sentiments. Khafi khan has quoted some of her verses in his work which bear testimony to this.[95] Nur Jahan's verses, especially in her extempore verses, most of which were composed as replies to Jahangir's queries, and exchange of verses between them. Here are a few examples:

Said Jahangir:

بلبل نیم کہ نعرہ کنم درد سردھم

پروانہ ام کہ سوزم و دم برنیاودم

Tr:- I am not the nightingale to cause headache by the noise. I am rather a moth which burns, without giving expression of the inner grief.[96]

Nur Jahan replied:

پروانعہ من نیم کہ بیک شعلہ جان دھم

شمعم کہ شب سوزم و دم برنیاورم

Tr:- I am not the moth to be perished by a single flame

I am rather a candle, ever burning through the night without making a noise.[97]

Said Jahangir:

نیست جانان برگریبان تورنگ زعفران

زردی رنگ رخ من شد گریبان گیرتو

Tr:- thy collar, my love, has not been dyed with saffron", Engraved therein is the pallor of my face".[98]

Nur Jahan commented:

ترانعہ تکمعہء لعل است بر قبایی حریر

شدہ است قطرہ خون منت گریبان گیر

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[95]. Anand Sugam, *History of Begam Nurjahan,* New Delhi: Radha Publications, 1992, p.66.

[96]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p.79. Also Abdullah Farooqi, "Nur Jahan", in *Cultural Heritage of the Mughals*, Massarrat Abid (ed.) literary editor Qalb-i-Abid, Lahore: University of the Punjab, 2005, p.338. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.172.

[97]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p. 79. Also Farooqi Abdullah, *Nur Jahan...*, pp.338-339.

[98]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p. 79.

Tr:- And it is the ruby-drops of my heart which have lent their have to those ruby-balloons on thy silken coat".[99]

چراخم گشتہ میگردندپیران جهان دیده؟ (جہانگیر)

بذیر خاک میجو نیدایام جوانی داد (نورجہاں)

Tr:-"Why do old men go about with their backs bent", asked Jahangir.

"They are seeking for their youth that is gone", replied Nur Jahan.[100]

Her love poems and verses were most appealing and show good expression of sentiments. Some of these are given below:

کشاد غنچہ اگر از نیم گلزار است

کلید قفل دل ما تبسم یا راست

نہ گل ثنا سد ونہ رنگ وبودنہ عارض وزلف

دل کسے کہ بحسن داد اگر فتا داست

Tr:- 'If the rose bud can be opened by the breezing in meadow, the key to our heart's lock is the beloved's smile.

The heart of one held prisoner by beauty and affection knowns not roses, color, aroma, face or trees.[101]

Once Jahangir met Nur Jahan after a long time, the tears were started to flow from her eyes with pleasure. After seeing her emotion, Jahangir read the fallowing verses:

گوہر رااشک چشم تو غلطیده می رود

Tr: A pearl tear from your eyes is rolling (down your cheek).

Nur Jahan:

آبے کہ بے تو خورده ام ازدیده می رود

Tr: The water I drank (the tear I choked back) without you comes forth from my eyes.[102]

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[99]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p.79. Also Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-I, p. 270

[100]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p. 79.

[101]. Sayyad Sahabuddin, *Bazm...*, p.445. Also Ellison Bank Findly, *Nur Jahan (Empress of Mughal India)*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.227.
Also Margaret Macnicol (ed.), *The Heritage of India Poems by Indian Women*, Eng tr. by Barkatullah, London: Oxford University Press, 1923, p.76.

Nur Jahan's verses, also called poetry of high order, are proof enough for her talent in the field. She too, like Salima Sultana, wrote under the pen-name of '*Makhfi*' (concealed).[103] Khafi Khan has quoted some of her verses in his work '*Muntakab-ul-Lubab*, which are as fallows:

دل بصورت ندهم تا شده سیرت معلوم

بنده عشقم و هفتاد و دوملت معلوم

زاهدا هول قیامت مفگن دردل ما

هول هجران گزرا ندیم قیامت معلوم

Tr:- I give not my heart to form (*surat*) if the disposition (*seerat*) be known. I am a slave of (divine) love and know 72 creeds. O ascetic I cast not the terrors of the judgment day into our heart, we have lived through the terrors of the separation and so can visualize the Day of Judgment.[104]

She had a keen interest in collecting books and had her personal library[105] to which she added books by making purchases from time to time. She appears, for example, to have bought for her library the *Diwan* of Mirza Kamran for three *Muhars*. On the very first page of this book these lines occur, 'Three *Muhars* the price of this treasure, Nawab Nur-un-Nisa'.[106] This shows that she had bought this book even before she got the name of 'Nur Jahan'. She was active in organizing poetic competitions during her time in the royal courts. In these competitions, also known as *Mushaira*, many celebrated poets from far and wide participated.[107] The most celebrated poet to grace the royal *Mushairas* convened by Nur Jahan Begum was Qasim Khan another son-in-law of Mirza Ghiyas Beg. He possessed a poetic temperament and composed a *Diwan* which was widely applauded. Thus, Begum Nur Jahan's outstanding contributions towards the literary field, as in many other fields, certainly made her one of, or perhaps, the leading and most remarkable royal lady of the Mughal dynasty in India. Thus well versed in Persian literature she composed

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[102]. Sayyad Sahabuddin, *Bazm...*, p.444. Also Findly, *Nur Jahan...*, p.227.

[103]. Shah Nawas Khan, *Maathir...*, Persian,Vol-I,Part-I, p.134. Also Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-I, p. 270.

[104]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-I, pp.270-271. Also P.N Ojha, *Glimpses of Social life in Mughal India*, New Delhi: Classical Publications, 1979, p.52.

[105]. Findly, *NurJahan...*, p.226. Also Anand Sugam, *History of Begam Nur Jahan*, New Delhi: Radha Publications, 1992, p.67.

[106]. P.N Ojha, *Glimpses...*, p.51.

[107]. Margaret Macnicol, *Pomes...*, Eng tr., by Barakat Ullah, p.79.

verses glimpsed and flowing which assisted her in capturing the heart of her husband. Her epitaph is a reflection of her great mind which knew ambition side by side with humility and simplicity:

Tr:-On the tomb of us poor people there will be neither a light nor a flower, nor the wings of moath, nor the voice of a nightingale.[108]

Mumtaz Mahal

Arjumand Banu Begum (Honourable Lady) was the daughter of Asaf Khan Nur Jahan's brother a powerful noble at Jahangir's court.[109] She grew up to be a beautiful, educated, cultured and accomplished young lady, well versed in Persian and Arabic literature, she also composed verses which showed her proficiency in Persian.[110] She was wife of prince Khurram (*Shahjahan*). After Shahjahan ascended the Mughal throne, Arjumand Banu came to be known as *Mumtaz Mahal* (crown of the seraglio). The lady was trained in the arts of music and painting. She acquired proficiency in Persian and Arabic literature. Her verses, like her aunt Nur Jahan's were mostly witty remark said in reply to Shahjahan's comments, in between conversations. Here are a few examples:

The task of awaking Shahjahan from his night's rest was entrusted to a maid-servant of Mumtaz Mahal who, once misjudging the time, awakes the emperor long before dawn. Thereupon Shahjahan lost his temper, came up to Mumtaz Mahal and said:

سربدین لازم است

Tr:- The head must be chopped of,

Replied the empress:

سربدین لازم است آن مرغ بی هگام را

این پری پیکر چه داندوقت صبح و شام را

[108]. Margaret Macnicol, *Pomes...*, Eng tr., by Barakat Ullah, p.79. Also Soma Mukhrjee, *Royal...*, p.175.
[109]. Jogindra Nath Chowdhuri, "Mumtaz Mahall", *Journal of Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, Vol-XI, 1937, p.373.
[110]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p.79. Also S.M Jaffar, *Education...*, p.195, Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.175.

Tr:-the head must be chopped off that bird who hath sung before her time, for what does this fairy creature knows of dusk or down.[111]

Once Shahjahan (*the king of the world*), with Mumtaz Mahal by his side, was watching from his palace, the river Jamuna leap and foam over the stones below. As a compliment to his wife, the emperor remarked:

آب از برائے دیدنت می آید ازفرسنگہا

Tr:- to see the luster of the face the river cometh all this way.

Replies Mumtaz Mahal:

ازہیبتِ شاہ جہاں سرمی زندبر سنگہا

Tr:- And because of the awe the 'King of the world' (*Shahjahan)* it dashed its head against the stones.[112]

Though little is known about Mumtaz Mahal's literary achievements, yet her witty verses reveal her lively mind and intelligence.

Akbarabadi Mahal

Another educated wife of Shah Jahan was Akbarabadi Begum, also known as Aizzun-Nisa Begum. She was eagerly interested for the spread of education and learning and built a *madarsah* with big expenses near the Faiz Bazaar at Delhi in 1667 A.D.[113]

Sati-un-Nisa

Sati-un-Nisa a learned Persian lady was the sister of a renowned poet, Talib-Amuli, who received the title of *Maliku-sh-sh'aarai* (King of Poets). She was the wife of poet Nasira, the brother of Hakim Rukna Kashi.[114] She belonged to a family of scholars and Physician and by good fortune joined the service of Mumtaz Mahal. For her charming manners, veracity, talents, higher education and profound literary taste, She was appointed tutor to princess Begum Sahib (*Jahan Ara Begum*).[115] She was highly educated in Persian and Arabic, She was not only a good reciter of the Holy

[111]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p.79. Also Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.176.
[112]. N.N Law, *Promotion...*, p.203. Also Sayyad Sahabuddin, *Bazm...*, p.442.
[113]. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Asar-us-Sanadid,* Anjum Khaleeq (ed.), New Delhi: Urdu Akadmi Daryaganz, 1990, Vol-I, p.349. Also Sayyid Sahabuddin, *Hindustan...*, p.197
[114]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.260.
[115]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.208.

Quran, but knew it by heart (*Hafiza*). She possessed poetical faculties and was renowned as 'the princess of poets'.[116]

Jahan Ara Begum

Jahan Ara was the oldest daughter of Shahjahan and Mumtaz Mahal. She was born at Ajmer on 21st Safar, 1023 A.H/ 1st April, 1614 A.D.[117] Jahan Ara was fourteen years of age when her mother died. She was the dearest and loved child of Shahjahan. Her title was (*Begum Sahib*). Jahan Ara in her childhood was a charming and intelligent girl, and she received the best education that was available for the royal princess in the Mughal seraglio. Shahjahan appointed Sati-un-Nisa as her,[118] (sister of Talib Amli, famous poet), the most talented and cultured lady who enjoyed the title of '*Malik-us-Shu'ra*, who was appointed as her tutors at the instruction of her mother Mumtaz.[119] Under the guidance of Sati-un-Nisa, Jahan Ara, within a short time learnt to read the Holy Quran and gained good knowledge of Persian. Soon Jahan Ara Begum began to compose verses.[120] Her verses earned her appreciation from one and all for their literary merit. She founded a Madrasah at Agra, attached to the Jami Masjid,[121] which acquired great renown and continued to function and prosper even in later time. Her own epitaph in the form of Persian couplet,[122] found on her simple marble grave near the saint Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi goes thus:-

بغیر سبذه نپوشد کسی مذار مدا

کہ قبر پوش غریبان همین گیاه بس است

Tr:- let nothing cover my grave except the green grass, For the green turf is covering enough for the poor.[123]

The green grass still blossoms over her sacred tomb and pious visitors sprinkle it with water. It would be hardly possible to find out in all history another epitaph on

[116]. Zinat kausar, *Muslim...*, p.158.
[117]. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, p.391.
[118]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.260.
[119]. M.A Yazdani, "Jahan Ara", *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society-3, Mughal India*, Ahmad Zulfiqar (ed,), Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publisher, 1982, p.2.
[120]. N.N Law, *Promotion...*, p.203.
[121]. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses...*, p.86.
[122]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.159.
[123]. K S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.98.

the tomb of an emperor's daughter so full of spirit of true Eastern humility and so redolent of the culture and refinement of truly noble life lived on earth.[124]

Jahan Ara was a pious and devout lady, and spent her spare moment in prayer, reading the Qur'an and the study of the lives of the Prophet Muhammad and Sufi saints.[125] She grew up to have a spiritual and mystic bent of mind, wrote many *Risalas* (pamphlets) on the subjects of mysticism and spirituality.[126] She occupies a prominent position among educated royal women. Her favourite study was religion, especially the Mystical Theology as enunciated by Sufi divines.[127] She wrote several religious treatises, but the highest mark of Jahan Ara is her literary achievement which happens to be the work called *Munis-ul-arwah.* It is a unique mystical work as it deals with the life and works of the Sufis which is known as *Malfuzat* (table talk). Jahan Ara had compiled this book in 1049 A.H (1639-40 A.D) and wrote it on 1053 A.H/ 1643 A.D. At that time she was twenty-six years old.[128] This biography of the Sufi saint of Ajmer, Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chisti, also contains biographical notes on some of his descendent and disciples.[129] *Munis-ul-arwah* is a compilation from several earlier works, principally *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar,* a history of saints by Shaikh Abdul-Haqq Muhaddith of Delhi. The work, however, though a compilation is interesting reading; it has on it the stamp of fine judgment, good taste, and ripe scholarship, and it is interpenetrated with a sincere religious spirit. The style is marked by a simple dignity, and an avoidance of superfluous ornament, besetting sin of the common class of contemporary writers.[130]

The other work called *Risala-i-Sahibiya,* the life of Mulla Shah Badakhshi, is also said have been Jahan Ara work.[131] Jahan Ara Begum's contribution towards the literary field did not limit itself to her verses and literary works. As a gratitude for the generosity and patronage, Mir Muhammad Ali Mahir, also known as Murid Khan, wrote a *masnavi* (long poem) in Praise of Jahan Ara Begum.[132] She founded a

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[124]. Yazdani, *Jahan Ara...*, p.41.
[125]. Yazdani, *Jahan Ara...*, p. 40.
[126]. Rekha Misra, *Women...*, p.90.
[127]. Yazdani, *Jahan Ara...*, p.43.
[128]. Sayyad Sahabuddin, *Bazm...*, p.450. AlsoYazdani, *Jahan Ara...*, p.27.
[129]. R.C Majundar, *The Mughal Empir (History and Culture of the Indian People),* Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan; 1974, Vol-VII, p.14.
[130]. Yazdani, *Jahan Ara...*; p. 43.
[131]. Rekha Misra, *Women...*; p.93. Also Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.159.
[132]. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, pp.112-113.

madarsa attached to the Jama Masjid at Agra,[133] which acquired great renown and continued to function and prosper even in later time. In Shah Jahan's period, the traveller, Tavernier remark about the qualities of Jahan Ara as follows:

"It is true that Jahan Ara has notable qualities and is capable of governing the whole empire if the responsibility of ruling was entrusted on her".[134]

Zabinda Begum

Zabinda Begum the forth daughter of Shah Jahan was also a gifted poetess, who composed a volume of mystical verses which are still read and admired by the learned of the Punjab and Hindustan.[135] One of the most interesting relics in Lahore is the gateway, called Chauburji-once the entrance to the garden of this learned princess, who in this retreat on the bank of the rain, composed her mystical poem.

Hafiza Maryam

Hafiza Maryam a learned lady was the mother of a high ranking noble man, Inayat-ullah Khan.[136] She was the wife of Mirza Shukrullah of Kashmir. Hafiza Maryam was a highly educated lady who knew, the holy Quran by heart, that's why she has been called *Hafiza*. She was also famous for the art of reciting the Holy Quran in an attractive way. She was the tutor of his daughter Zeb-un-Nisa. "From her Zeb-un-Nisa learnt to commit to memory the words of God and the practice of the accomplishments".[137]

Zeb-un-Nisa

Zeb-un-Nisa (the ornament of womanhood), the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb by his wife Dilras Banu Begum, was born on 15th February, 1638, at Daulatabad.[138] She was educated by a learned lady named Hafiza Maryam, the wife of Mirza

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[133]. Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses...*, p.84.

[134]. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India (1640-1667)*, Eng tr. by V.Ball, London, New York, Macmillan & Co, 1889, Vol-I, pp.299-300

[135]. S.M Jaffar, *Education...*, p.196.

[136]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.681.

[137]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.681. Also Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.160.

[138]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir ...*, p.322. Also Iswar Das Nagar, *Futuhat-i-Alamgiri*, Eng translated & edited Ahmad Tasneem, First Publishing, 1978, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-I, 2009, p.162. Jadunath Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, Calcutta: M.C.Sarkar & Sons, 1919, p.79.

Shukrullah of Kashmir, whose family originally came from Nishapur in Khurasan.[139] Since her childhood she showed great intelligence, and she was educated from an early age. At the age of seven years she was a Hafiz, she knew the Quran by heart.[140] Although her father was against the custom of Arabic being the medium of education and would have preferred it to be in the language of the country, Zeb-un-Nissa learnt this language in four years from a lady named Miya Bai,[141] and became proficiency.

She was the most accomplished and her academic achievements show how a talented princess received her education in the Mughal *harem*. She was taught by Hafiza Maryam and Mulla Said Ashraf Mazindarani, a highly learned woman and a great Persian poet respectively. Shah Rustam Ghazi, a renowned scholar, too helped her in her literary pursuit. She was a poetess, a proficient mathematician and astronomer, had learned the Quran by heart for which she was rewarded thirty thousand gold pieces by her father. [142] Aurangzeb is said to have organized a grand feast to celebrate the occasion, we read that the whole army was feasted in the great Maidan at Delhi.[143] From her early life she wrote verses, at first in Arabic and after that she wrote in Persian, her mother-tongue. She had as teacher a scholar called Shah Rustam Ghazi,[144] who encouraged and directed her literary tastes. She completely mastered the Arabic and Persian languages, and in writing various kinds of hand, such as *Nastaliq*, *Naskh* and *Shikasta* with neatness and grace.[145]

The greatest achievement of Zeb-un-Nisa in the literary field lies in her poems. Poetry had appealed to her since her childhood days. Aurangzeb also appointed an accomplished scholar Mulla Said Ashraf Mazamdarani as her tutor. Under his guidance Zeb-un-Nisa gained proficiency in Theology and cultivated a taste for poetry and became a renowned poetess.[146] She was keenly interested in *Mushaira*

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[139]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.681. Also Samsuddin Ahmad Hafiz, "Zib-un-Nisa Diwan-i-Makfi", In *The Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Patna, 1927, Vol-XIII, p.42.

[140]. Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan of Zeb-un-Nissa (First Fifty Ghazals)*, Eng tr. by Maghanlal and Jessie Duncan Westbrook, Lahore: Orientalia Publishers and Booksellers- 1st edition (wisdom of East series) 1913 and 2nd Edition (Courtesy John-Murray), 1954), p.2.

[141]. Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan...*, p.9.

[142]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.110.

[143]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir* ..., p.322. Also Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan...*, p.2. Jadunath Sarkar, *Studies...*, p.79.

[144]. Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan...*, p.2 (introduction).

[145]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir* ..., p.322. Also Jadunath Sarkar, *Studies* ..., p.79.

[146]. Sayyad Sahabuddin, *Bazm...*, p.456. Also Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.178. Samsuddin Ahmad Hafiz, *Zib-un-Nisa Diwan-i- Makfi*, Vol-XIII, p.42.

(poetical contest), and often organized it in her palace, and she herself remained behind a curtain.[147] She enjoyed a great deal of freedom in palace. She knew several learned men of her time, and held discussions with them. Zeb-un-Nisa's verses were much valued by her father's elder brother Dara Shikoh who was a scholar and broad-minded person. When she first began to write, she modestly attributed her verses, and lots of the *gazals* in the *Diwan* to Dara Shikoh.[148] She came out in the court and helped in her father's councils, but always with the veil upon her face.[149] Zeb-un-Nisa has written Persian poetry under the pseudonym of '*Makhfi*', (the concealed one).[150] Once Nasir Ali said these verses, "o envy of the moon, loft up the veil and let me enjoy the wonder of the beauty". She answered:-

I will not lift my veil;

For, if I did, who know?

The bulbul might forget the rose,

The Brahman worshipper

Adorning Lakshmi's grace

Might turn, forsaking her,

To see my face;

My beauty might prevail.

Think how within the flower

Hidden as in a bower

Her fragrant soul must be,

And none can look on it;

To see me the world can see

Only within the verses I have write,

I will not lift the veil.[151]

[147]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim* ..., p.163.

[148]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal*..., p.181. Also Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan*..., p.4.

[149]. Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan*..., p.4.

[150]. Abdul Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh,* Eng Translated and edited by Sir Wolseley Haig, Patna: Academica Asiatica, 1973, Vol-III, p.494 (Footnote).

[151]. Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan*..., pp.4-5.

The title of *Makhfi* was born by several other poetesses, like Salima Sultana and Nur Jahan.[152] She also wrote under the pen-name of *Zeb*, some have ascribed to her the collection of poems called the *Diwan-i-Makhfi.*[153] Clear regard too many of the love adventures attributed to her, she seems to have been a deeply religious woman.

Quite a few years of Zeb-un-Nisa's later life were spent in captivity and loneliness, she being also deprived of all her property. Says Zeb-un-Nisa about this irony of the fate:

"Dokhtar-i-Shaham wa lekin ru ba foqar awardaam.

Zeb-o-Zeenat bas hamin num nam-i-man Zeb-un-Nisa ast,

Tr:-I am the daughter of an emperor, yet I have set my face towards poverty. This is what adorns my beauty and my name is Zeb-un-Nisa (the adorned of women).[154]

Remarks and answers to questions. Here a few selected verses by Zeb-un-Nisa.

An attendant said:

از قضا آئینہ چینی شکست

Tr:- The Chinese mirror is broken an gone.

Zeb-un-Nisa Replied[155]

خوبشد، اسباب خور بینی شکست

Tr:-It is all right. An object of vanity is broken.

In another case, to the statement:-

درابلق کي کم دیده موجود

Tr:- Rarely has a piebald pearl (half black, half white) been seen', was a stiff hemistich to complete.

Replied Zeb-un-Nisa:

مگر اشک بتان سرمعہ آلود

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152. Jadunath Sarka, *Studies* ..., p.79.

153. Margaret Macnicol, *Pomes*..., p.36.

154. Margaret Macnicol, *Pomes*..., p.78.

155. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal*..., p. 80. Also Hadi Hasan, *A Golden Treasury of Persian Poetry*, The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Government of India, Delhi: 1888, p.186.

Tr:-Unless it be the tears of a damsel with collyrium In her eyes.[156]

Seeing Zeb-un-Nisa on the palace-roof dressed in a green sari, the poet and governor "Aquil khan said":

سبزپوشي بلب بام نظر می آید (عاقل خان)

Tr:-A form dressed in green appears under the blue Valt of haven.

Zeb-un-Nisa quickly replied:

نه بزاري نه بزوري نه بزرمي آید (زیب النساء)

Tr:-Neither force nor gold nor guile will bring her to thee (by heaven).

And when Aqil Khan continued to press his suit, she quoted from poet Sadi:

چراکاری کنہ عاقل کہ بازآید پشیانیی؟

Tr:-Why should the wise man (Aqil) commit an act which bring repentance in its train?[157]

Her grief and pain are also evident in this verse;

ای آبشار نوحہ گرازبھرکیتی؟

سر در نگوں فگندرہ زا ند وہ چیتی

آیا چہ دردبود کہ چون ماتمام شب

سربرزمین میزدي و میگریتی؟

Tr:-Oh waterfall for whose sake art thou mourning? For whose sake hanging the head down in grief? And what manner of pain was it that likes me through the life night thou didst dash thy head on the on ground and weep. [158]

Here is one of her saddest poem, expressing something of the tragedy of her life:-

O idle arms,

Never the lost beloved have ye caressed.

Better that ye were broken than like this

Empty and cold eternally to rest.

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[156]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p.80. Also *Golden Treasury...*, pp.186-87.
[157]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, P.80. Also *Golden Treasury...*, pp.186-87.
[158]. Hadi Hasan, *Mughal...*, p.79. Also *Golden Treasury...*, p.186.

O useless eyes,

Never the lost beloved for all these years

Have ye beheld; better that ye were blind

Than dimmed thus by my unavailing tears.

O foolish springs,

That brings not the beloved to my abode.

Yea, all the friends of youth have gone from me.

Each has set out on his appointed road.

O fading rose,

Dying unseen as hidden thou wert born;

So my heart's blossom fallen in the dust

Was never ordained his turban to adorn.[159]

Her religious views also extended to the oneness of God and unity of religions. Her verses are indeed praiseworthy and speak of her high merit as a poetess. In her own words:

Tr:- *In the field of poetry, I am a concealed one, like the odour of the rose which remains hidden in the petals. Whoever looks at my poetry is inclined towards me.*[160]

The historians agreed that Zeb-un-Nisa Begum passed the greater part of her life in literary pursuits and was a great patron of letters. She collected several books and manuscripts, and maintained a personal library, in the imperial palace, where her father with her choice set aside for her some spacious rooms to be utilized as her library.[161] She had established a department for the translation of classical books and for writing original works.[162] She spent a large sum of money on these literary works with her support and encouragement Mulla Safiuddin Ardbeli of Kashmir translated the Arabic work *Tafsir-i-kabir* (great commentary) of Imam Razi into Persian, and

[159]. Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan...*, p.10.
[160]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.187.
[161]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*; p .179.
[162]. Samsuddin Ahmad Hafiz, *Zib-un-Nisa Diwan-i- Makfi*, Vol-XIII, p.42.

named it *Zeb-ut-Tafsir,* after the name of his patroness.[163] The author of *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* praises it much and say, 'that the like never seen before'.

"Dar Sarkar Elaih kitab khana gard

Amda bud ke ba nazar-i-hech yake dar neyamda bashad".[164]

Tr:- This library had books on various disciplines, viz, History, Literature, Law and Religion *(Islam)*; and she used to spend several hours everyday in their study and none dared to disturb her during the course of study.

Zeb-un-Nisa led a pious life without marriage and died on 26th May, 1702 A.D,[165] after her death in 1724, scattered writings were collected under the name of *Diwan-i-Makhfi*, literally, the book of the hidden one. It contained four hundred and twenty one *ghazals* and numerous *rubais.* In 1730 other *ghazals* were added many manuscript copies were made in both India and Persia; some beautifully illuminated examples are known and preserved.[166] She collected a fine library and employed skilled calligraphers to copyrare and valuable books for her.

Zinat-un-Nisa

Second daughter Zinat-un-Nisa (Ornament of womanhood) of Aurangzeb was born on 5th October, 1643AD.[167] Her mother was Dil-ras Bano Begum. From her very childhood, her father had taught her under his strict supervision. As a result she gained proficiency in Islamic culture. She also composed poems. She was known for her piety and charity. At her personal expense she built a mosque called the *Zinat-ul-Masjid,* in Delhi. Here she was buried after her death.[168] She wrote her epitaph in Persian which says:

مونسِ مادر لحد فضل خدا تنہا بس است

سا یہ ند ایر رحمت قبر پوشِ مایس است

[163]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir* ..., p.322.
[164]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir* ..., Persian p.539, also Eng tr., p.322.
[165]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.163.
[166]. Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan...*, p.11.
[167]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir* ..., Eng tr., p.323.Persian p.593.
Also Jadunath Sarkar, History *of Aurangzeb,* Calcutta: M.C.Sarkar & Sons, 1912, Vol-I, p.70.
[168]. Jadunath Sarkar, *History...*, Vol-I, P.70.

Tr: In my grave the grace of God is my only help. It is enough if the shadow of the cloud of mercy covers my Tomb.[169]

Badr-un-Nisa

Badr-un-Nisa (Moon of the women), the third daughter of Aurangzeb and Nawab Bai, was born on 17th November 1647 A.D.[170] she was an educated lady, though not so highly educated as her sisters.[171] Under the guidance of her father, she memorized the Holy Quran.[172] She was greatly loved by Aurangzeb for her good character, manners and kind heartedness. She was not as highly educated as her sisters as has been stated above. However, she had more inclination towards religion, which become deeper, when she memorized the Holy Quran and simultaneously when she attained the age of maturity. Since she had less inclination towards fields of education other than religion, and was distinguished only because of this, her father loved her a lot.

Beside these ladies, Shahjahan's daughter Roshan Ara, Aurangzeb's daughter Zubdatun-Nisa (The Cream of women), Sahebji, the daughter of Ali Mardan Khan, wife of Amir Khan Mir Miran were other learned Muslim women of the age. Besides, the mother of Hafiz Draz Peshawari during the reign of Akbar was a highly accomplished and pious lady.[173]

[169]. Margaret Macnicol, *Pomes...*, p.79. Also Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.164.
[170]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir* ..., p.323. Also Elliot & Downson, *History...*, Vol-VII, p.197.
[171]. N.N Law, *Promotion...*, p.204.
[172]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir* ..., p.323.
[173]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.167.

Chapter: 3

Mughal Women and the Realm of Creativity

The Mughal Emperors had creative inclination. They were great builders, scholars, musicians, painters, garden layers, dress designers and patronized almost all forms of arts and crafts. Their contribution of the Mughal in the fields of art and architecture is undoubtedly remarkable. The ladies of royal family were also interested in various types of arts. They often spent their leisure in cooking, dress-designing, painting, decoration, dancing, music etc.

Cooking

Akbar divided his household into many departments; each department contains separate staff to look after the efficiency of the work. The arrangement for the food and drink of the Emperor was entrusted to the *Matbakh*[1] (known as imperial kitchen), being one of the departments of the household of the Emperor, it came under the control of the *Khan-i-Saman*, The *Abdar Khana,* which supervised drinking water and wine, the *Miwa Khana,* which was provided with fruits for the consumption of the imperial household, and the *Rikab Khana* or the bakery.[2] The royal ladies did not cook their meals of the *harem*. Expert cooks were engaged in it. There was a common kitchen attached to the precincts of the *harem*, though adequately separated from it in order to maintain seclusion and *purdah.* It was a full-fledged independent department. Enough funds and servants were allocated to it. Trustworthy experienced persons were appointed to this department, *Mir-Bakawal* [3](Master or Head of the imperial kitchen), were appointed and first-class servants found to the court, and were resolved to carry out well whatever service they had undertaken. He was helped by several competent officers called *Bakawals* (supervisor of the kitchen). There were separate treasuries for cash, and clever writers were attached to this department.[4] Cooks from all countries prepared various vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes of all kinds; grains, greens and meats; dry and oily; and sweet (*mitha*) and spicy (*chatpata*) dishes.[5] At the time of food preparation, and when the victuals are taken out, an awning is spread, and lookers-on kept away. The cooks fold their sleeves, and the

[1]. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari,* Eng tr. by H.Blochmann, Colonel D.C. Phillott (ed.), First Published, 1927, 1949, Delhi: Low Price Publications, Reprint, 2011, Vol-I, p.23.
Also Khuand Mir Ghyasuddin Muhammad, *Qanun-i-Humayun*, Muhammad Hidayat Husain (ed.), Persian, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940, pp.48, 50.

[2]. M.A Ansar, *The Diet of The Great Mughals,* Islamic Culture, Vol. XXXIII No.4, October, 1959, p.2

[3]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, pp.59-60

[4]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, p.60

[5]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, p.60

border of their clothes, and hold their hands before their mouths and noses when the food is taken out; the cook and the *Bakawal* taste it, after that it is tasted by the Mir *Bakawal*, and then set into the dishes.[6]

Manucci reports "every day one thousand rupees are disbursed for the expenses of the king's kitchen, and the officials are required to furnish therefore all that is necessary'. They had to lay before the prince a fixed number of ragouts and different dishes in vessels of China porcelain placed on gold stands".[7] Many varieties of food were prepared every day for the Emperor to select from, and some dishes were always kept half ready to be served fast if the Emperor calls for them.[8] Foods prepared by Turkish and Persian combinations gave a different variety. As a result, during the period of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan we find many new delicious dishes. Therefore, when a hundred dishes on the royal table could be placed at a short notice; fifty dishes could be seen on the table of noble.[9] The list of the variety of dishes is long enough only some particular dishes find description here. Abul Fazl describes the variety of food of Akbar arranged under three broad heads:[10]

(a) Such in which no meat was used, called *Sufiyana.*[11]

(b) Such in which meat, rice, etc were used, and

(c) Meats with different kinds of spices,

Abul Fazl gives a long list of delicious dishes prepared in Mughal period. Rice was the chief cereal of India many variety of foods were prepared from it. Some of them were *khushkah, qabuli,*[12] *duzd biryani, qima pulow, sullah* and *qima shurba,*[13] *goshfand biryani,*[14] (mutton *biryani*), was also liked. We find some references of

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6. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.61.
7. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia-do-Mogor*, Eng tr. by William Irvine, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street Government of India, 1907, Vol-II, p.332.
8. Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal World: Life in India's Last Golden Age*, New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2007, p.66.
9. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.60. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.332.
10. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, pp.61- 64.
11. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, pp.61, 64-65.
12. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Sir Sayyid Ahmad (ed.), Aligarh: Sir Sayyid Academy Muslim University, 2005, Persian, p.41, Eng tr., Vol-I, p.62.
13. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Persian, p.41.
14. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara*, Eng tr. by H.Beveridge, Revised, Annotated by Baini Prashad, Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1979, Vol-I, p.816. Also Edward Terry, *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, Foster William (ed.), London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921, p.311.

pullaow 'green, red and black', in Pelseart's account.[15] *Mahi* (fish) and *murgh pullow* were also popular.[16] Nur Jahan invented a dish called *Nur Pullaow*[17] was also a favourite dish of the Muslim. *Khichri* was a popular food of India. *Lazizah*[18] was also a kind of *khichri,* very common in Gujarat. Aurangzeb's favourite dish was *khichri-i-biryani.*[19] Many other sweet dishes were prepared with rice. *Zard brinj* (zarda), was a saffron colour dish, *muzaffar* was another variety of *zarda. Sapeda* was a white sweet dish made with rice. For *mutanjan,* rice, sugar and meat were used. *Surbrinj* was prepared with milk, rice and sugar-candy.[20] Abul Fazl's list includes about twenty different kinds of meat dishes prepared in the imperial kitchen. Among them *qutabs, sambosas* and *kababs* were special ones favoured by all.[21]

Abul Fazl refers many varieties prepared by wheat flour like, *thuli, chikhi, badanjan* and *qatab* better known as *sambosa.*[22] *Namak pare, harisah* and *kashk* were prepared with crushed wheat and *halim* cooked with wheat. *Khurma, khajori*[23] and *shakar pare*[24] were prepared with wheat flour and sugar. *khaja, puwa* and *malpua*[25] were also sweet dishes. *Mahbubi*[26] was a favourite dish. Bread of various kinds was popular in Mughal period, *sheermal, baqar khani, qulcha taftan* were favourite, baked in oven.[27] Ladies of nobility baked a kind of bread very popular, with flour, milk, butter and eggs,[28]

Fruits, green and dry, of different varieties constituted an important item in the diet consumed, especially by the well-to-do classes, both amongst the Hindus and

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[15]. Francisco Pelseart, *Jahangir's India, The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelseart,* Eng tr. by W.H. Moreland and P.Geyal. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2011, p.68.

[16]. R.R Diwakar, *Bihar through the Ages,* Calcutta: Orient Longmans, 1959, p.533.

[17]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim Women in Medieval India,* New Delhi: Janaki Prakashan, 1992, p.58.

[18]. Nur-ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri,* Eng tr. by Alexander Rogers, Henry Beveridge (ed.), First Published, 1909, 1914, Delhi: Low Price Publications, Reprint, 2006, Vol-I, p.419.

[19] *Ruka' at-i-Alamgiri or Letters of Aurangzeb,* Eng tr. by Jamshid.H.Bilimoria, London: Luzac & Co, Bombay Cherag Printing Press, 1908, (Letters-x), p.12.

[20]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, pp.61-62.

[21]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, pp. 59-60. Also M.P Srivastava, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1707),* Allahabad: Chugh Publications, 1975, p.105.

[22]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, pp.62-63.

[23]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.59.

[24]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.59.

[25]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.59.

[26]. R.R Diwakar, *Bihar...,* p.533.

[27]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...,* Vol-I, p.64. Also R.R Diwakar, *Bihar...,* p.533.

[28]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.59.

Muslims. Foreign travellers like Manucci and Careri[29] and also some contemporary poets[30] refer in details to a great variety of Indian fruits. Manucci calculates the expenses of the allowances of the *matbakh* in Aurangzeb's reign at Rs. 1000 daily, when the allowances seem to have greatly reduced due to the ascetic habits of the Emperor and his economy.[31]

A Muslim lady should have high proficiency in the art of cooking, because the Muslim was very choosy of delicious dishes. A woman having vast knowledge in the art of cooking was very much admired in her society. Therefore from the initial stage, Muslim girls were trained in the preparation of different tasty dishes. Besides imparting religious education, the first and foremost duty of the mother was to teach her daughter the art of cooking. Due to the *purdah* system they had enough time to gain a high degree of excellence in the art of cooking. Thus, we find that during the Mughal age Muslim ladies of all classes were delighted in cooking and proud of their skill. In Mughal *harem,* even though ladies of such families took extraordinary interest in preparation of delicious dishes. It was only on rare occasions that some lady took some special interest in cooking.

Hamida Bano Begum, mother of Emperor Akbar, was famous for her proficiency in the art of cooking. Therefore, Abul Fazl informs us that when long fast came to an end, the first dishes of dressed meat used to go to Akbar from his mother's apartment Mariyam Makani, next from the other Begums, the princes and the other nobility.[32] Her preparation of meat was excellent. Empress Nur Jahan who had great interest in the preparation of food, took great delight in introducing new varieties of dishes, which were greatly admired by the Emperor Jahangir. Once on the occasion of *Shab-i-Barat,* Jahangir with his Amirs and courtiers attended a feast arranged by Nur Jahan herself. In that feast different types of delicious dishes were served to guests in which 'all sorts of roast meats' were especially very tasty and were prepared under Nur Jahan's personal supervision.[33]

During the reign of Shahjahan's some Muslim ladies specialized in the art of cooking. Sati-un-Nisa Khanam was not only a highly educated lady of her time but

[29]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.66, Vol-III, pp.180-85,
[30]. P.N Ojha, *Glimpses of Social Life in Mughal India,* New Delhi: Classical Publications, 1979, p.3.
[31]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.332. Also M.A Ansar, *The Diet ...*, p.4.
[32]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.62.
[33]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.385.

she had good knowledge of cooking also. Therefore by the order of Shahjahan, she always prepared the breakfast for the Emperor himself.[34] Shahjahan's daughter Jahan Ara had great interest in cooking and knew the art very well. Jahan Ara Begum occasionally prepared some dishes. Jahan Ara said in her *Risala-i-Sahibiya* that she prepared vegetable bread and different varieties of food and sent it to the Saint Hazrat Miyan Meer.[35] In Aurangzeb's time one of Aurangzeb's wives Udaipuri Mahal had profound knowledge of the art of cooking. Sometimes she prepared special dishes for her husband, despite her numerous engagements. According to Manucci, once she invited Aurangzeb and served a *rogout* (stew) prepared by her.[36] Nawab Bai, was the wife of Asad Khan the *wazir,* a trained lady in the art of cooking.[37] The wife of Zafar Khan had great skill in the art of cooking when she sent different types of dishes for Aurangzeb, the Emperor found all the dishes very tasty.[38]

Thus we see that cooking was regarded as an art and Muslim women possessed a high degree of proficiency in this art, considered to be an important part of vocational education.

Embroidery & Dress Designing

India from ancient times has been famous for different types of embroidery. References to embroidery work are scattered in the literature of the Vedic era. It is important to mention here that the advent of Muslims in India in later centuries brought about a rapid change in this art. Embroidery in India has traditionally been woman's art. They embroidered beautiful figurative and floral designs on cotton, silk, wool, velvet and even on leather.[39]

During the Mughal period, different varieties of embroidery such as, *chikan dozi* or *chikan kari, kasheeda, phulkari* (suit in stitch) chain stitch, cross stitch and all sort of needle work both cut and wrought works were done by ladies.[40] Embroidery

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[34]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.261.

[35]. *Risala-i-Jahan Ara Begum*, Transcription No-5, CAS Department of History AMU, Aligarh, Persian, p.28. Also Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D),* New Delhi: Munishiram Manoharlal, 1967, p.93.

[36]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-III, pp.258-59.

[37]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.352.

[38]. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India (1640-1617),* Eng tr. by V. Ball, New York: Macmillon & Co, 1889, Vol-I, pp.389-90.

[39]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.180.

[40]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.181.

with golden and silver threads was mostly liked by the Muslim ladies but thread of either silk or cotton was also used. Muslim girls took great interest in embroidery work, from the very beginning, as in their marriage array their pieces of embroidered work were kept as proof of their skill. Among royal families also, embroidered cushions, dressed with collars and bordering of gold embroidery, embroidered *rumal* (handkerchief) and other things were given in the dowry of a girl.[41]

Therefore, in the royal *harem* princesses were taught methods of embroidery by certain old woman, known as '*Atun*'.[42] Among royal ladies, Nur Jahan had proficiency in embroidery and needle work. It is well-known that since her childhood days she was very much interested in embroidery in which she excelled. This childhood trait later developed into her flair for innovation in dress and textiles. Woman's dresses also change at this time because of Nur Jahan. She discarded old designs of clothes which were inconvenient to wear and instead designed new patterns.[43] These new clothes were available for both the royalty and the common people. Several new model and stitches were invented by Nur Jahan. In place of the *peshwaz* (Full-dress gown), she introduced a very light dress called *dudami* which weighed just two dams.[44] Her *panchtoliya* a scarf weighing only five *tolas,* too was a light substitute for a head cover or *orhani,*[45] The *kinari,* a type of silver threaded lace, and *badla* or *badhah,* a kind of silver-threaded brocade.[46]

Her *farsh-i-chandni* [47](white floor sheet) or sandalwood carpet became very famous all over the country and was available in different colours and designs. Some of these designs are still renowned.[48] A female overdress known as Jammu consisting of a tight fitting *kurti,* up to the knee and tight sleeves fastened up to the breasts,

41. Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun Nama,* Taskand Uzbekistan Raqlan Academe, 1959, Persian, p.36.
42. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.181.
43. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...,* Vol-II, Pt-II, p.1077. Also Khafi khan, *Muntakhab-Al-Lubab,* Maulavi Kabir Al-Din Ahmad (ed.), Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1869, Part-I, Persian, p.269.
44. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...,* Vol-II, Pt-II, p.1077. Also Anand Sugam, *History of Begam Nurjahan,* New Delhi: Radha Publications, 1992, p.54. Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, *Nobility Under the Great Mughals (Based on Dhakhiratul Khawanin of Shaikh Farid Bhakkari),* Eng tr. by Z.A.Desai, New Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan Karol Bagh, 2003, Vol-II, p.15
45. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...,* Vol-II, Pt-II, p.1077. Also Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, *Nobility Under,* Vol-II, p.15. Anand Sugam, *History...,* p.54.
46. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...,* Vol-II, Pt-II, p.1077.
Also Prasad Beni, *History of Jahangir,* Allahabad: Indian Press, 1962, p.169.
47. Khafi khan, *Muntakhab...,* Part-I, p.269
48. Beni Prasad, *History...,* p.169.

decorated with frills in front and worn with the *angiya* (Jacket), tight fitting trousers and thin cotton *dupattas* became very popular.[49] Nur Jahan also "laid down new patterns and elegant designs for many gold ornaments". She also designed inexpensive dress for marriage ceremonies and named it *Nur Mahali* which could be got for just Rs. 25, and was easily affordable for poor people.[50] Nur Jahan was versatile, as only a very few of the great women of the world's courts have been. A hundred years after her death the fashions in dress she designed are still worn.[51] Kafi Khan, who wrote a century later, said that 'fashions introduced by Nur Jahan still governed the society and the old ones survived only among the Afghans in backward towns'.[52]

During the Mughal age, when the sewing machine was not invented, tailoring was regarded an important art. As sewn garments were worn by Muslim, ladies in well-to-do families were given instruction for the cutting and stitching of different types of dresses. In royal families too, ladies knew the art of stitching and tailoring. Babur's wife Maham Begum and ladies of Humayun's household knew the art of stitching well.[53] Nur Jahan had mastery over stitching and tailoring.[54] She had a keen sense of colour combination and symmetry in designs. She was a master mind in innovating fashions and style. She introduced new cut and designs in dresses. In woman's gowns she introduced some new styles which became fashionable among the ladies of Delhi and Agra.[55] For introducing new designs, Nur Jahan became so popular among the court ladies that they insisted on wearing what Nur Jahan had designed.[56] Her designed could be used by the rich and the poor alike. Jahangir was a fan of fashion and latest designs. His clothes and turbans are said to have been more luxurious than any of the other earlier Emperors. She was careful to bring out and introduce items that not only had a large group appeal but were relatively inexpensive. The new trends and designs were accounted in the time of his life with Nur Jahan. Her

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[49]. Anand Sugam, *History...*, p.71.
[50]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-I, p. 269. Also Anand Sugam, *History...*, p.71.
[51]. Harold Lamb, *Nur Mahal*, Published by Doubleday, Doran &Company, 1932, p.317
[52]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-I, p. 269.
[53]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, Persian, p.27.
[54]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.181.
[55]. Alexander Dow, *The History of Hindustan*, (Muhommadan Conquerors of India), Delhi: Atlantic Publishing House, 2000, Vol-III, p.31.
[56]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.181.

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sewing and embroidery were sold in the popular market of *Kinqri Bazar* Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore and Delhi.[57] She also invented patterns for gold ornaments[58].

Aurangzeb's daughter, Zeb-un-Nisa knew the art very well, and had interest in cutting, stitching and embroidering different varieties of clothes. *Angiya Kurti* a change, to suit Indian circumstances, of the costume of the women of Turkestan; it is now worn all over India.[59] A new design of ladies dress introduced by her was a great contribution in the field of Muslim women's costume. In her leisure hours she invented some beautiful pieces of embroidery work and introduces them to the people.[60]

The Art of Decoration

The ladies of the Mughal *harem* were keenly found of the art of decoration and applied it in various aspects of their lives, on festivals and special occasions. Gulbadan Begum in *Humayun Nama* stated several occasions when the royal ladies took upon themselves the task of looking into the decoration of their palaces, gardens and surrounding areas. Maham Begum, wife of Babur and the mother of Humayun took such initiatives many a times.[61] After the victory of Chunar, when Humayun returned to Agra safely, Maham Begum became so happy that she organised a great feast. To share the joy under her own guidance and supervision she beautifully decorated the palaces and *bazars*.[62]

Not only the royal ladies but the ladies of the nobility also knew the art of decoration and took delight in its exhibition. On the occasion of Akbar's circumcision Bega Begum's garden was enviously decorated. Sultan, Amirs and other royal personalities decorated their quarters too. At this joyful event the Begums and ladies exhibited their art by decorating their gardens 'quite wonderful in a new fashion'.[63]

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57. Zeb-un-Nissa, *Diwan of Zeb-un-Nissa (First Fifty Ghazals)*, Eng tr. by Maghanlal and Jessi Duncan Westbrook Lahore: Orientalia Publishers and Booksellers- 1st edition (wisdom of East series) 1913 and 2nd edition (Courtesy John-Murray), 1954), p.14.
58. Massarat Abid, Literary editor S.Qalb-i-Abid (eds), *Cultural Heritage of the Mughals*, Lahore: University of the Punjab, 2005, p.337.
59. Anand Sugam, *History...*, p.53. Also Zeb-un-Nisa, *Diwan...*, p.6.
60. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.181.
61. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp.113-14.
62. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.113.
63. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.179.

Nur Jahan was also an expert in the decoration apartments, palace and gardens. Nur Jahan exhibited keen interest in the decoration of the inner apartments.[64] With exquisites taste, vision of colour and care, she enhanced the magnificence of the Emperor's court. The expenditure was considerably curtailed by her superb art of household management. She made great improvement in the quality of furniture used in the royal apartments, introduced new royal fashions and etiquettes looking more dignified and colourful than those used before. She decorated the apartments with curtains, *jhilmils, chilmans* and *chicks*. The infusion of gold, silver and precious stones on pillars and the ceilings was seen everywhere. These partitions and curtains that beautified royal ladies 'glittered with diamonds', provided them opportunity to know about the outer world.[65] Nur Jahan decorated the spacious courtyards with marble, mosaic paintings and other inlaid decoration. She got them enclosed by gardens with water courses and fountains all round.[66]

Nur Jahan invented new ways of arranging feasts and entertaining guests.[67] Emperor Jahangir greatly appreciated her ability to arrange feasts perfectly. Jahangir in his memoirs mentioned several occasions when feasts were arranged by Nur Jahan Begum. On the occasion of *Shab-i-Barat,* Nur Jahan organized a feast in one of her houses situated in the middle of large tanks.[68] Jahangir also spoke of the wonderful feast he attended with his other ladies at Nur Afshan garden.[69]

Once when Jahangir recovered from illness Nur Jahan, in great joy, arranged a grand feast and adorned the assembly with such care and skill that it astonished the beholders.[70] Not only the apartments and gardens but the animals used by the Emperor Jahangir, were also adorned beautifully on festive occasions. Nur Jahan is credited with making the housing with various pieces of *khwanposh* (cover of trays), sent by the nobles. Jahangir was astonished to see such a beautiful covers on his

[64]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-I, p. 269. Also Chandra Pant, *Nur Jahan and Her Family*, Allahabad: Dandewal Publishing House, 1978, p.118.
[65]. Anand Sugam, *History...*, pp.71-72.
[66]. Anand Sugam, *History...*, p.72.
[67]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-I, pp.269-270.
[68]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.385.
[69]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p.199.
[70]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p.214.

elephants' body.[71] She invented new patterns and new ways of decorating apartment buildings and arranging feasts, for "Jahangir was fond of feast, dancing and music".[72]

Janan Begum, the widow of Daniyal and the daughter of Abdur-Rahim Khan-i-Khanan,[73] was proficient in the art of decoration. When Jahangir reached Deccan she arranged a great feast in the garden and invited the Emperor with his troops. It was autumn season and all the trees of the garden were naked without leaves. Yet this intelligent lady managed to hang artificial flowers, fruits and leaves made of different varieties of cloth, wood and way on the trees. When Jahangir plucked one of the fruits hanging on the trees with his hand he was surprised to see the art and skill of Janan Begum.[74] Aurangzeb's daughter Zeb-un-Nisa was also familiar with the art of decoration. She used to decorate her apartments with artificial bunches of flowers.[75]

Perfumes

The creativity of Nur Jahan was remarkably manifested in the invention of many scents. Her mother Asmat Begum invented the *itra Gulab* (rose perfume) known as *itr-e-Jahangiri* of which Jahangir recorded: "this *itr* (perfume) is a discovery which was made during my reign through the efforts of the mother of Nur Jahan Begum". When she was making rose-water once Jahangir noted, "a scum formed on the surface of the dishes into which the hot rose-water was poured from the jugs".[76] She collected this scum little; when much rose water got a sensible piece the scum was collected. It is of such strength in fragrance that if one drop be rubbed a whole assembly would come out as if many red rosebuds had bloomed at once. It is an excellence perfumes. In reward for that discovery he presented a string of pearls to the inventers.[77] Salima Sultana Begum was also present and she gives name this oil *itr-i-Jahangiri.*[78] Nur Jahan Begum invented extraction of inexpensive scent for

71. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-I, p.132.
72. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol.I, p.157.
73. Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan k Musalman Hukmaran k Ahad k Tamaddni Jalway,* Azamgarh: Ma'araf Press, 1963, (Urdu), p.226. Also Muhammad Husain Azad, *Darbar-i Akbari,* Urdu, New Delhi: Al Hasanat Books, 2008, p.645.
74. Muhammad Husain Azad, *Darbar...*, p.646. Also Sayyid Sahabuddin *Abdurrahman, Hindustan...*, p.226.
75. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.185.
76. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, pp.270-71. Also Findly, *Nur Jahan ...*, pp.114-115.
77. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, pp.270-71
78. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, pp.270-271.

common people, since *ittar-i-Jahangiri* was very costly.[79] She invented (For example), "the *Jahangiri itr* which enjoys responses over all the perfumes from the beginning of their coming into existence till the time of resurrection, there was not, is not and will not be such a perfume".[80]

Painting

The art of painting was one of the favourite fine arts of the Muslim ladies of the Mughal period. Till the sixteenth century it is difficult to say whether Muslim ladies achieved proficiency in this art or not, as references to Muslim lady being painters are not readily available. Nothing is clearly known about the specific contribution made by the Mughal ladies in the field of painting though there are enough evidences available to reveal their interest in this field. Quite a few paintings of that time can be taken as body of proof in this field,[81] for example, a *nim qalam* drawing named 'lady painter in the *harem'* (C.1635-40) in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi (No-683) shows a Mughal lady engaged in painting, but her identity is not known.[82] The painting of a woman working on a portrait in the *zanana,* or woman's quarters, is important evidence of a practice that was suspected but not previously documented. The few existing signed miniatures by woman are not feminine genre scenes but copies of older literary subjects and as yet there is no adequate evidence to prove that male artists were allowed to paint woman from direct observation. Women were commonly depicted simply as beauties and were not sketched in the same exacting fashion as men.[83]

Children growing up in artistic tradition, learn the techniques of mixing colours and making brushes from a very early age. The imperial ladies were greatly interested in paintings but no reference is available evidence their learning and achievement in this art. There is only one available reference of female painter named Nadira Bano, the daughter of a pupil of Aqa Riza who made copies of Flemish drawings.[84] These ladies patronized those painters who were appointed by the Mughal

[79]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...,* Vol-II, Pt-II, p.1077. Also Chandra Pant, *Nur...,* p.119.

[80]. Shaikh Farid Bhakkari, *Nobility...,* Vol-II, pp.14-15.

[81]. *In the Image of Man,* Catalogue Dr. George Michell, Catherine Lampert and Tristram Holland (eds), New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982, p.136, no-141.

[82]. George Michell, *In the...,* p.136.

[83]. George Michell, *In the...,* p.136.

[84]. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of The Great Mughals,* History, Art and Culture, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005, p.273.

Emperor for their aesthetic taste. Not much is known about the contribution, direct or indirect, of any other royal Mughal lady in this field. Only that Dara Shikoh had presented his album, a wonderful collection of Mughal miniatures, to his wife, princess Nadira.[85] It is not only a taken of love for his wife, but also a body of proof to entertain princess Nadira's great interest in painting. There is a fine drawing during Shahjahan period, which give a picture of a female artist among the other women, capturing her surroundings on a drawing block, was one notable female artist, Sahifa Banu around 1620.[86]

According to Beni Prasad, Nur Jahan could paint well.[87] But as in the case of other royal ladies, there exists no paintings that can be attributed to her hand. Even then, Nur Jahan Begum is said to have influenced Mughal paintings in a subtle way taking keen interest in this field. Nur Jahan appreciated greatly her husband's interest in painting.[88] Fancy portraits confessing to be Nur Jahan's shooting at birds and animals are seen in some albums, but none of them bore any real evidence of being authentic representation of the pictures the painters of that age intend to depict.[89]

According to Manucci, "I do not bring forward any portraits of queens or princesses, for it are impossible to see them. Thanks to their, being always concealed if anyone has produced such portraits, these should not be accepted, being only likeness of concubines and dancing girls, which they have been drawn according to the artist fancy".[90] But scholars like K.S. Lal convincingly stated that Nur Jahan herself painted some amount of excellence.[91] Women were being depicted in the miniatures produced in Jahangir's period.

Nur Jahan influenced the paintings under Jahangir. She was undoubtedly the grateful beneficiary of several single images and illustrated manuscripts made in the

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85. C.M.Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals,* London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913, pp.182-183.
86. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire...*, p.158. Also Ashok Kumar Srivastava, *Mughal Painting An Interplay of Indigenous and Foreign Traditions,* New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2000, p.49. Das Asok Kumar, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir's Time,* Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1978, p.127.
87. Beni Prasad, *History...*, pp.168-169.
88. Percy Brown, *Indian Painting Under The Mughals (1550 to 1750 A.D)*, First Published Oxford, 1924, reissued New York: by Hacker Art Books, 1975, p.157.
89. Percy Brown, *Indian Painting ...*, p.158
90. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol.II, p.334.
91. K.S Lal, *The Mughal Harem,* New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988, p.77.

imperial studios. A copy of Hafiz's Diwan, for example, copied by Khawaja Abdus Samad *Shrinqalam* in the reign of Akbar illustrated with miniatures under Jahangir, bore the seal of Nur Jahan, indicative to be presented to her on some special occasion by her husband.[92] In the early period of his reign Jahangir liked religious paintings like the image of Madonna and Jesus Christ procured most easily from the Portuguese Jesuits who traded and proselytized on Indian's western shores.[93]

In Mughal period we find reference of another lady painter Mumtaz Mahal, the royal consort of Shahjahan. She appears to be adept in the art of painting.[94] However, not a single piece of her paintings could be preserved, only references are available to us, scattered here and there on books.

Musicians & Dancers

During the Mughal period, singing and dancing was not encouraged in Muslim society, in view of Islamic restrictions imposed on this art, although this was considered to be the favorite motion of the royal ladies of Mughal *harem.*[95] The Mughal Emperor had also made suitable arrangements for the recreation of the inmates of the *harem.* Inside the *harem* there were a number of female singers, vocal and instrumental, over them there was the lady superintendent of music. They received regular salaries. Their salary was the same as the other *matron* and women servant of the *harem.* They received allowances besides occasional presents from the princes and princesses.[96] The entertainers comprised dancing girls and troupes of orchestra. Some of them were highly educated and most accomplished artisans who taught reading and writing to the princesses.[97] These female musicians were conferred special names[98] by the Emperor. Their names had some connection with their gestures and activity. Strangely enough in spite of bearing Hindu names all of them were Muhammadans.

Babur the first Mughal Emperor was very fond of music. He was so highly impressed by the peculiar ways of performance of the dancing girls of the *harem* of

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92. Asok Kumar Das, *Dawn of Mughal Painting,* Bombay: Vakils, Feffer & Simons, 1982, p.83.
93. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.224.
94. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.183.
95. Manucci, *Storia...,* Vol.II, p.345.
96. Manucci, *Storia...,* Vol.II, pp.331.334-35.
97. Manucci, *Storia...,* Vol.II, p.331.
98. Manucci, *Storia...,* Vol.II, p.335.

Ibrahim Lodi that he gifted one dancing girl to each one of his important Begums.[99] Akbar also had interest in music. His Majesty, writes Abul Fazl, "Pays much attention to music and is the patron of all who practices this enchanting art".[100] There are numerous musicians at court, Hindu, Iranis, Kashmiries, both men and women. The court musicians are arranged in seven divisions one for each day in the week.[101] Jahangir and Shahjahan, being deeply interested in music, extended generous patronage to competent musicians. Some of the Mughal Emperors like Shahjahan and Aurangzeb at a later stage of their reign forbade music and musicians in their court.[102]

Apart from the male court musicians, female court singers and dancers were also entertained during the Mughal times. They performed their skills on the occasion of marriages, festivals and feasts. There had been various groups bearing different names. The most popular among them were the *Kanchanis,* formerly known as *Kanjaris* and given the name of *Kanchanis* by Akbar.[103] By the time of Shahjahan they became very popular and much favoured and appeared twice at court.[104] Apart from the daily routine, music formed an essential part of the court rejoicings and festivities on the solar or lunar New Year's Day, the anniversary of the royal accessions to the throne, marriage and birth ceremonies, the recovery from sickness of princes or princesses, and the Ids.[105] On the occasion of the recovery of the princesses Jahan Ara, (1054/1644), Shah Jahan bestowed thousand rupees on Lal Khan Gunsamudr, one thousand rupees on Rang Khan, and twelve thousand rupees on other musicians.[106]

During the Mughal times there were famous female singers like Meera Bai of Mewar, Mrignayani, the eighth queen of Raza Man Singh, and Roop Mati of Malwa. Some royal Mughal ladies too sang beautifully, played musical instruments and composed songs. Abul Fazl refered to a particular class of female singers, who were

[99]. Gulbada, *Humayun...*, pp.7, 95.
[100]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.681.
[101]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.681.
[102]. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural Life of the Mughal Mughals(1526-1707A.D)*, Javeed Ashraf (ed.), Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 2008, p.218.
[103]. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.218.
[104]. M.A Ansari, *Socio-Cultural...*, p.218.
[105]. S.R. Bakshi and S.K. Sharma (eds), *The Great Mughals, (Shah Jahan, Part-5)*, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1999, p.233.
[106]. Lahori Abdul Hamid, *Badshah Nama,* Mawlawis Kabiruddin and Abdurrahim (eds.), Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1867, Vol-II, p.400. S.R. Bakshi and S.K. Sharma (eds), *The Great...*, p.233.

able to sing and play upon thirteen pairs of *talas* at once.[107] They were mostly from Gujrat and Malwa. *Tera-Tal* is still extremely famous in Rajasthan. "*Dhadi* women" sang on a particular instrument named *dahada* belonged to Punjab. They could play *Daff* (drum), *Dafzan* and Tambourine.[108]

Nur Jahan, had proficiency in the art of singing and dancing. She patronized classical music and dance but disliked the prevalent cheap quality of royal entertainment in the *harem.* She tried to stop them and start healthy and classical music conferences of expert musicians. She composed and sang the songs in a melodious style.[109] Paintings of ladies holding various musical instruments exhibit popularity of music among women. Nur Jahan patronized the music composed by women on festivals like *Nauroz Mahfil.*[110] When she was unmarried she often accompanied her mother to the royal *zanana.* Occasionally in these visits she sang and danced for many queens and princesses and delighted them all with her art.[111] Nur Jahan was not only a gifted singer[112] but also a poetess who composed beautiful lyrics.

Mumtaz Mahal had a sweet voice and sometimes she used to sing songs in praise of her husband. She also had interest in music.[113] Nadira Begum, the beautiful daughter of prince Parvez, a son of Shahjahan, is beloved to have been a talented singer of classical music. Her rendering of the *dhurpad* was liked by Shahjahan very much.[114] Shahjahan had presented her with a volume of *ragas* and *raginis* composed by Mian Tansen.[115] Aurangzeb's daughter Zeb-un-Nisa was a gifted singer and a perfect musician. She would recite the verses of the Holy Quran in such a sweet voice that the ladies of the *harem* were astonished to hear it.[116] She also composed songs in Persian, Arabic and Urdu.[117] Zainabadi (Hirabai) one of the Aurangzeb's wives, was

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[107]. Quoted in Rukhsana Iftikhar, "Cultural Contribution of Mughal Ladies", *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies,* Vol. 25, No. 2, July-December 2010, p.326.
[108]. Rukhsana Iftikhar, *Cultural...,* p.326.
[109]. Rekha Misra, *Women...,* p.95.
[110]. Rekha Misra, *Women...,* p.95.
[111]. Beni Prasad, *History...,* p.162. Also Dow Alexander, *The History...,* Vol-III, p.22.
[112]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.186.
[113]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.186.
[114]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal Mughal Ladies and Their Contributions,* New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2001, p.22.
[115]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...,* p. 222.
[116]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.186.
[117]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...,* p.186.

a gifted singer of her time.[118] Zainabadi's musical skills[119] and charm captivated the hearts of many including Aurangzeb, who could never forget her even after her death.

Dance

Dancing was not considered respectable art during the Mughal times. Aristocratic ladies did not usually take interest in learning this art. The art of dancing was not the activity of upper class women. They were at present the entertainers. It was confined to a class of professionals only. The Mughal Emperors entertained themselves with dance performances at their *darbar*. Dances were presented in the restricted assemblies and parties of Mughals. Marriages, birthdays and special ceremonies of royalty and nobility were the event of dance performance.[120] Royal family and aristocracy did not like that their females to be taught this art because they could get the dancers some prices. The royal ladies watched these performances from behind veils. They were very found of watching each entertaining programmes and they often watched dance performances in the *harem* too. Many Mughal women loved dance performances.[121] A specific class of women took dance as a profession. Akbar used to call them *"Kanchains"*. They danced with amazing liveliness and were always correct as regards to time.[122]

Abul fazl mentioned special performances of dance named *"Akhara"* (Style of Dance) to be held to entertain the nobility. In which domestic servants were taught to sing and play..... Four pretty women guide a dance and some graceful movements were performed.[123] The lighting arrangements enhanced the beauty of the occasion. Two women held lamps near the circle of performances....[124] this group of performers was called *Natwa.* They trained their young girls especially in singing, dancing and playing instruments. The dancing and singing women on the occasions received attractive presents from princesses and other freak ladies... when the ladies were

[118]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Persian, Vol-I, p.790.
[119]. Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb,* Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar & Sons, 1912, Vol-I, p.65.
[120]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p. 168.
[121]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.168.
[122]. Francois Bernier, *Travels in The Mughal Empire (1656-1668 A.D),* Eng translated and Annotated by Archibald Constable, Second edition Revised by Vincent A. Smith, New Delhi: Atlantic Publisher and Distributers, 1990, p.274.
[123]. Quoted in Rukhsana Iftikhar, *Cultural...*, p.328
[124]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-II, p.346.

present they also never do it with empty hands, but always carried expensive presents to be offered.[125]

In the reign of Shahjahan female dancers and public women enjoyed great liberty and were found in great number in the cities.[126] A big staff of singing and dancing girls was attached to his court.[127] Thereafter, many Mughal ladies began to posses their own personal troupers of dancing girls for entertainment. They were respectable classes opted no profession but dancing and singing.[128] Many lived within the environs of the *harem*. Among the entertainers were also *Bazigars* and rope dancers (*Nats*) entertained the ladies by their wonderful feasts.[129] Some Europeans praise the dance of *Domnis*, some others of Persian women. There were several classes of dancers, Pelsaert wrote, among them (are) *Lolonis*, who came down from courtesans coming from Persia to India and sang only in Persian; and a second class, *Domins* who sang in Hindustani and their songs were considered more beautiful, more loving and more thoughtful, than those of the Persians. Other classes namely *Horckenis* and *Hentsinis* had various styles of singing and dancing but they were all like accommodating people.[130] Most of these accommodating people were just harlots and prostitutes. Peter Mundy, who visited India, also mentioned about *Lalnis, Harkanis, Domnis*, etc.[131] Emperor Aurangzeb prohibited dancing and singing at court, yet he allowed it in his palace for the entertainment of the *harem*.[132] Manucci reported that "those who performed in the court were more respected than others, by reason of their loveliness. When they go to court, to the number of more than five hundred, they all ride in highly embellished vehicles, and rich clothed".[133] Thus under the patronage of queens, princesses and begums of nobles women singers and dancers were encouraged inside the *harem*.

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[125]. Rukhsana Iftikhar, *Cultural...*, p.329.

[126]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.9.

[127]. Pelseart, *Jahangir's...*, p.83. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.336.

[128]. Bernier, *Travels...*, p.273. Also Thavenot and Careri, *Indian Travels of Thavenot and Careri*, Surendranath Sen (ed.), New Delhi: National Archives of India Qeensway, 1949, p.71.

[129]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.271.

[130]. Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, p.83. Also Lal K.S, *The Mughal...*, p.167.

[131]. Peter Mundy, *The Travels...*, Vol-II, p.216.

[132]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol.II, p.335.

[133]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.189. Also Shadab Bano, *Women Performers and Prostitute in Medieval India*, Studies in History 27 (1) 41-53, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru University SAGE Publications, 2011, p.46

Architecture

The Mughal ladies lived in utmost luxury in fine apartments and palaces built for them by the Emperors and the princes. These apartments were separately built, spacious and splendid, according to the position of the woman in the Emperor's *harem*. This fact is quite evident from the *Mariam's Kothi*, Turkish Sultana's apartments, *Jodha Bai's Mahal* and the apartments of other ladies of the *harem* at Fatehpur Sikri, the quarters of *Bilqis Makani* (Jahangir's mother), Nur Jahan and the *Bengali Mahal* where the ladies of various nations resided, at the Agra Fort, the *Imtiyaz* and *Rang Mahals* of the ladies at the Red Fort in Delhi, and also from the women's apartments in the Lahore Fort. During the Mughal age we come across remarkable women like Haji Begum, Jodha Bai, Nur Jahan, Jahan Ara,[134] Roshan Ara, Zeb-un-Nisa and Zinat-un-Nisa, whose remarkable buildings exist even today.

We do not come across any building constructed by the Mughal women during Babar's or Humayuns's times worth mentioning, except some gardens to be discussed later on. The first lady who constructed building was Haji Begum (The wife of Humayun).[135] She got the famous tomb of her husband Humayun built with great care during the reign of Emperor Akbar. Gulbadan called her Bega Begum.[136] She was Humayun's cousin and wife of his youth.[137]

Haji Begum

The Humayun's tomb was built after Humayun's death in eight years by Haji Begum in Delhi. She became its faithful attendant thereafter.[138] It is one of the first garden tombs built by the Mughals in India.[139] This tomb made of white marble and red sandstone is rightly regarded as a synthesis of the Persian and Indian building styles. This splendid memorial was built by Haji Begum (Humayun's senior widow), not by Hamida Bano Begum, in memory of her husband. Construction of the tomb began in 1560 A.D. and got completed in 1573 A.D (Figure No.2.1).[140] It stands on a

[134]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, 342, Vol-II, p.64.
[135]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.219
[136]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.219.
[137]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.218.
[138]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.220. Also Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan...*, p.179
[139]. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens of Mughal India*, Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1973, p.71.
[140]. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p.71.

large square platform 22ft. high, having arches, whose piers are ornamented with marble inlay work.[141] The main tomb is an octagonal apartment, 47 ft and 4 inches across and crowned by a dome of white marble.[142] In the corner rooms there are the tombs of Haji Begum and some nine other members of the royal family. All the apartments add up to make a building square in plan and about 155 ft. each way, "with the angles slightly cut away".[143] The tomb has a beautiful garden attached to it.

It was the first imperial Mughal mausoleum in India. The architect of Humayun's tomb Mir Ghiyas Mirak was, according to Percy Brown, "almost certainly of Persian origin. Humayun tomb stands as an example of the synthesis of two of the great building styles of Asia; the Persian and Indian".[144] Havell describes Humayun's tomb as "perhaps more Persian in character than any other important building in India".[145] Perhaps the nearest definition of the architecture style of Humayun's tomb is that "it represents an Indian interpretation of a Persian conception".[146]

She also built Arab Sarai for Arab travelers and merchants in 1560 having an accommodation of only 300.[147] Bernier, who had scant praise for the eastern inns, waxed eloquent over the Begum Sarai built by Jahan Ara at Delhi for its excellent residential and security arrangements and compared it with the palace royal in Paris.[148] A noble house and garden was built on the road from the Agra to Bayana under the direction of Haji Begum.[149] Thevenot writes, "Upon the road from Agra to Bayana there is a royal house built by the queen mother (step) of Eebar (Akbar) with gardens kept in very good order".[150]

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[141]. Fergusson James, *History of India and Eastern Architecture*, Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1876, Vol-II, p.290.

[142]. Fergusson James, *History ...*, p.290.

[143]. Fergusson James, *History...*, p.290.

[144]. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co, 1956, p.92.

[145]. E.B Havell, *Indian Architecture (Its Psychology, Structure and History from the first Muhammadan Invasion to the Present day)*, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1913, p.158.

[146]. Percy Brown, *Indian...*, p.97.

[147]. S.K Banerji, *Humayun Badshah*, Lucknow: Maxwell Company, 1941, Vol-II, p.317. Also Jagdish Narayan Sarkar, *Mughal Economy: Organization and Working*, Calcutta: Naya Prokash, 1987, p.115.

[148]. Bernier, *Travels...*, pp.280-81.

[149]. S.K Banerjee, *Humayun...*, Vol-I, p.317.

[150]. Thevenot and Careri, *Indian Travels...*, p.57.

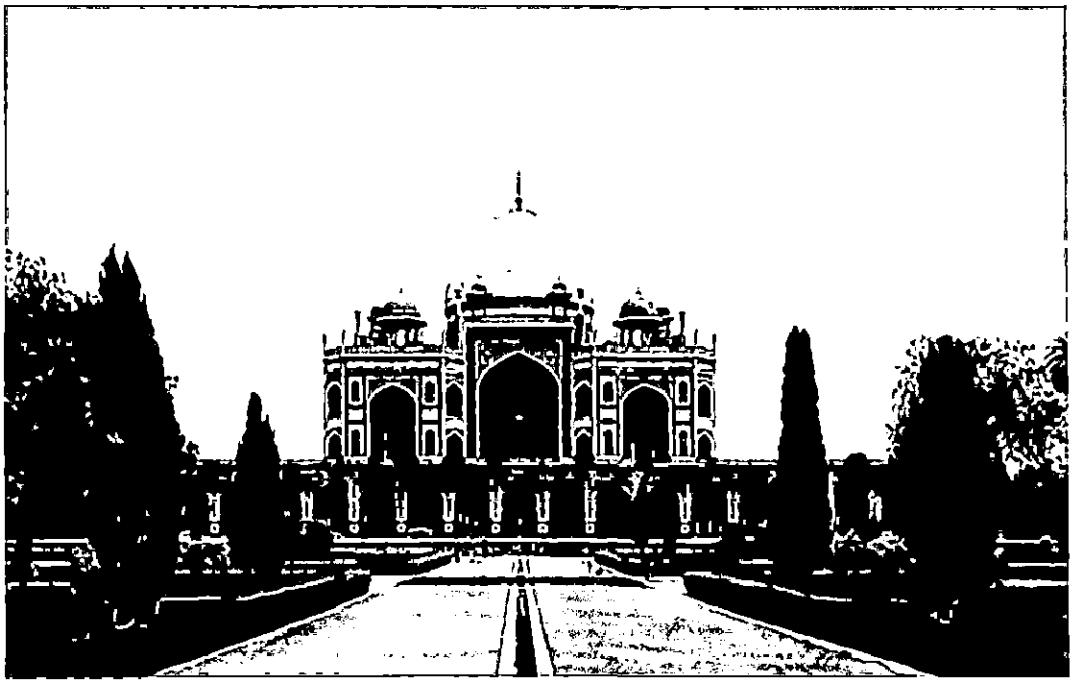

Figure No. 2.1: Humayun tomb Delhi

Maryam-uz-Zamani

During the time of Emperor Jahangir, a garden and a well that was also built by the order of Maryam-uz-Zamani in the *pargana* of jusat was on the road, a *baoli* (step well) was built and had been very well.[151] In his memoir Jahangir writes, "Certainly the *baoli* (Step-well) was a great building and had been built exceedingly well. I ascertained from the officials that the sums of Rs. 20,000 had been expended on this well".[152] William Finch in his account speaks of a place called Menhapoore near Bayana where he had gone to buy indigo and lodged at a great *sarai* where there was a garden *Mahal* and or summer house of the queen mother (Jahangir's mother), "very curiously contrived".[153]

Emperor Jahangir also described in his memories other gardens; first of all "I walked around the Shaharara.... Then in the garden that Bika Begum, garden mother of my father had made...then a ground, Maryam Makani, my own grand mother had prepared. The Shaharara garden was made by Shaharara Bano Begum (daughter of Mirza Abu- Said) who was aunt of the late king Babar".[154] She founded the Begum Shahi Mosque in Lahore (1611-14) and constructed a cascading fountain near the idgah in Bayana (1612).[155]

Nur Jahan

Nur Jahan took keen interest in the development of Architecture. Her aesthetic taste and refinement reflected in all what she designed and built under the spell of her Sharp intellect and vision. Pelseart comments that, "she erected very expensive building in all directions".[156] In *Tuzuk-i-jahangiri* it is mentioned that she built the *Nur Sarai*.[157]

Nur Mahal Sarai

[151]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-II, p.64.
[152]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-II, p.64.
[153]. William Finch, *Early Travels in India,* Foster William (ed.), London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921, p.148.
[154]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-II, p. 64.
[155]. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire*..., p.148.
[156]. Pelsaert, *Jahangir's*..., p.50.
[157]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-II, p.192.

In 1620 A.D, Nur Jahan's *Vakils* (representatives) completed a large *Sarai*[158] in Jalandhar (district Punjab). It is situated 16 miles South of Jalandhar, 25 miles south-east of Sultanpur and 13 miles West of Phalor (Figure No.2.2).[159] The *Sarai* was built on a measuring 551 square feet. It had octagonal towers at the corners. The western gateway, called Lahore gate is double-storied and built in red sand-stone. Its front is divided into panels ornamented in sculptured relief. There were figures of angles, lotuses, nymphs, lions, elephants, birds, peacocks, men on horseback, etc. the scenes represented by many of these had historical importance depicting the life of Mughal Emperor like Chaugan.[160] The courtyard inside the *sarai* had thirty-two rooms to a side, each measuring ten feet ten inches square, "with a verandah in front. In each corner there were three rooms, one large two small. The Emperor's apartments formed the centre block of the south side, three storeys in height" Jahangir's quarters, once beautifully finished inside.[161] Over the entrance to the gateway is an inscription, flanked by scenes of fighting animals and sculpted lotus-mounds. It was completely financed by Nur Jahan popularly known as "*Sarai Nur Mahal*". Nur Jahan Begum built another *Sarai* called *Nur Mahal Sarai*, near Agra situated in the district of *Nur Mahal*,[162] Peter Mundy stopped at this *Sarai* on 6th August 1632 A.D, and found it still in use. He wrote, "This *Sarai* is very fair one, built by the old queen *Nur Mahal*.... For the accommodation of travellers"[163] Mundy estimated that it could accommodate two to three thousand people and five hundred horses.[164] It was made completely "of stone, not one piece of timber in it, the rooms all arched each with several Copulas". It stood "between two gardens, built also by her".[165]

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158. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p.192.
159. Findly, *NurJahan...*, p.229.
160. Findly, *NurJahan...*, p.229.
161. Findly, *NurJahan...*, pp.229-30.
162. Findly, *Nur Jahan ...*, p.229.
163. Mundy Peter, *The Travels...*, Vol-II, p.95.
164. Mundy Peter, *The Travels...*, Vol-II, p.78. Also P. Saran, *The Provincial Government of The Mughals*, Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1973, p.411.
165. Peter Mundy, *The Travels...*, Vol-II, PP.78-79.

Figure No.2.2: Nur Mahal Sarai, http://www.csaaa.in

Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula

Itimad-ud-Daula was the father of Nur Jahan.[166] Itimad-ud-Daula tomb constructed under the supervision of Nur Jahan, in Jahangir's reign, and completed in 1628 A.D,[167] took six years to finish the tomb and 7-35 million rupees (1,350,000) to expense for it (Figure No.2.3). The tomb represents the pure Persian element dominating in Mughal art of architecture and correctly marks the stage when Persian influence of her father's tomb in a garden along with the bank of the Yamuna at Agra, which is the best architectural gem of Jahangir's period. The tomb occupies the central position of the garden and stands on a raised square platform, measuring 69ft, on each side.[168] The tomb has two storeys with an octagonal tower at each of the four sides, surmounted by an open pavilion. The upper pavilion contains a second pair of cenotaphs surrounded on each side by large latticed windows.[169] The lower story has a central chamber in the form of a parallelogram measuring 22ft. and 3 inches on each side.[170] This chamber contains the main cenotaphs of Itimad-ud-Daula and his wife Asmat Bano Begum. The floor is made of marble and is richly decorated with mosaic work. The walls have inscriptions from the Islamic scriptures. The four corner chambers are occupied by the brother, sister and some other members of Itimad-ud-Daula's family.[171] There are three arches opening out each side of the main portion of the building, separated from one another by latticed lancets.[172]

The tomb is not very big or massive and one is drawn more towards its decoration than its form. It is built entirely of white marble and covered throughout with inlay work called "*pietra dura*"[173] the white marble surface worked with polished inlays of semi-precious stones in a technique similar to that developed in Florence in the sixteenth century.[174] The entire expense was bear by Nur Jahan's treasuries.

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166. R.M.Martin, *Our Indian Empire (Afghanistan, Beloochistan, Persia)*, The London Printing and Publishing Company Limited, Vol-I, pp.121-22. Also Chandra Pant, *Nur...*, p. 116.
167. Peter Mundy, *The Travels...*, Vol-II, pp.78-79.
168. E.B Havell, *A Handbook to Agra and the Taj*, Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co, 1904, p.87.
169. Fergusson James, *History...*, Vol-II, p.305.
170. Fergusson James, *History...*, Vol-II, p.231.
171. A.L Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture*, Agra: Shivalal Agarwala & Co, 1964, p.207.
172. A.L Srivastava, *Medieval...*, p. 207. Also E.B Havell, *A Handbook...*, p.86.
173. Raj Kumar Pruthi Rameshwari Devi (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Indian Society and Culture*, Jaipur: Mangal Deep Publications, 2002, Vol-IV, p.96.
174. Findly, *Nur Jahan ...*, p.231.

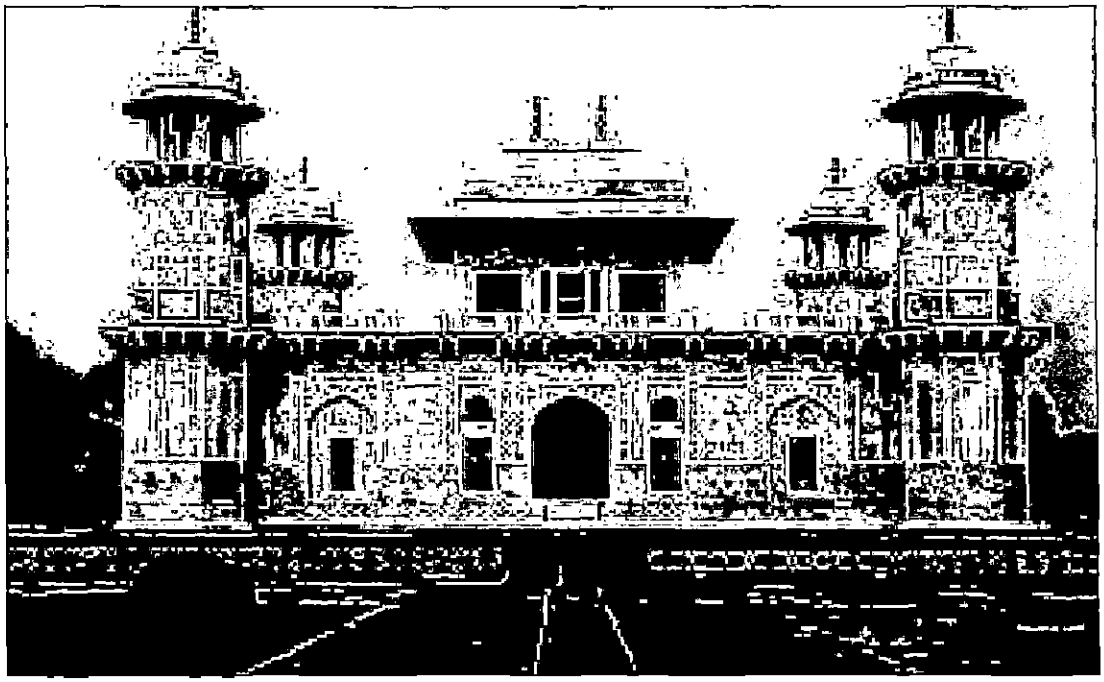

Figure No.2.3: Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula Agra

Pathar Masjid Srinagar

Nur Jahan built a mosque at Srinagar (Kashmir) called *Nau Masjid* (New Mosque) *Shahi Masjid* (Royal Mosque) or *Pathar Masjid* (stone Mosque).[175] The Mosque is made of grey lime-stone and has a front facade of nine arches, the central arch being bigger than the other eight (Figure No.2.4).[176] It is said that this mosque had been deserted and never been used for the purpose it was built. It was used as a store-house.

Jahangir's Tomb Shahdara

After the death of Jahangir in 1648 A.D, here she was buried at Shahdara, alongside the banks of the river Ravi, not very far away from her husband. It is situated 6 miles north-west of Lahore, in the Dilkusha Garden, once a pleasure ground of Nur Jahan Begum, now called Shahdara.[177] The plan of this tomb resembled that of Itimad-ud-Daula[178] at Agra and that of Akbarat Sikandra.[179] The layout comprised of an outer *Sarai* with a Series of alcoves round the walls to provide shelter for the travellers, a tall gateway leading to the inner garden and the main tomb building inside this garden (Figure No.2.5).[180] There are gateways on all the four sides. The mausoleum stands on a low plinth, 256ft. square and consists of a terraced platform with octagonal minarets of three stories above the terraced roof, surmounted by white marble cupolas. It is surrounded by arcades, having a central arch flanked by a doorway and five other arches on each side.[181] The sarcophagus is made of white marble with *pitra dura* inlay work and is placed in an octagonal chamber.[182] This building is made of red sand stone with marble inlay.

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175. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.239.
176. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.238.
177. Crowe and Hayhood, *The Gardens*..., p.131.
178. Crowe and Hayhood, *The Gardens*..., p.131. Also C.M. Villiers Stuart, *Garden of The Great Mughals,* London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913, p.131.
179. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden*..., p. 131. Also A.L Srivastava, *Medieval*..., p.208.
180. Crowe and Hayhood, *The Gardens*..., p.131.
181. Fergusson James, *History*..., Vol-II, p.305.
182. Fergusson James, *History*..., Vol-II, p.305.

Figure No.2.4: Pathar Masjid Srinagar, http://www.makemytrip.com

Figure No.2.5: Jahangir tomb Lahore, http://www.snipview.com

Nur Jahan's tomb was set on a square platform occupying the centre of a *Charbagh* having boundary walls.[183] The original garden does not remain any more, but it is said to have had canals, tanks, waterfalls, fountains, cypress trees, tulips, roses, and jasmine and fruit trees, especially date palms.[184] It was square in shape, one story, with seven arches, opening out the corridors on each of the four sides. The interior was arranged in a series of three arched and columned galleries. In the central part is a square room which has the cenotaphs of Nur Jahan and her daughter Ladli Begum, placed on a platform in the centre.[185] Much of the decorative part of the tomb was destroyed in course to time though some of it was restored later with red sandstone and marble inlay. Whatever remains of the interior surface decoration reveal painted design rather than of inlaid stone.[186]

The most attractive and significant of all the arts of Nur Jahan, yet, was the most beautiful gardening. The Kashmir valley was a perfect setting for gardens and it was a favourite one for Jahangir and Nur Jahan. There were an abundance of fruits, flowers and water in Kashmir. The Mughal Emperors and their ladies, especially from Jahangir's time onwards, were extremely fond of visiting Kashmir on holidays. Nur Jahan owns gardens known as *Jarokha Bagh* or *Darogha Bagh* on *Lake Manasbal* and *Bagh-i-Bahar Ara* at *Dal Lake* were the highest manifestation of her improved taste of gardening. She also created many other gardens all over the empire, both public and private.

Shalamar Bagh, Dal Lake Kashmir

Shalamar Bagh, built Kashmir on the old Hindu ground of Pravarasena II.[187] Jahangir reports, "in these two or three days frequently embarked in a boat, and was delighted to go round look at the flowers Phak and *Shalamar* is near the lake. It has a pleasant stream, which comes down from the hills, into the Dal Lake".[188] When Jahangir first laid out the *Shalamar* garden, he almost certainly had the help of Nur Jahan, and although Shahjahan was responsible for the famous black marble work

[183]. Ebba Koch, *Mughal architecture (An Outline of Its History and Development (1526-1858),*Munich: Prestel, 1991, pp.96-97.
[184]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.241.
[185]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., pp. 241-242.
[186]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.242.
[187]. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens*..., p.98.
[188]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-II, p.151.

lone in the pavilions, the overall design reflects the tastes and innovations of his ather's queen.[189] *Shalamar Bagh* is divided into three main areas: an outer of public garden containing the grand canal extending from the Lake to the first large pavilion, he *Diwan-i-Am* to the *Diwan-i-Khas* and the royal both houses (*hammam*) to upper vall with small guardroom at each end; lastly, the *zenana* garden for the ladies of the *arem* which had the large black marble pavilion and the elaborate waterworks set in cross round it.[190] The garden on the whole is simple in design with all the trees, anals and buildings matched with each other giving an unerring sense of proportion.

The *zenana* garden stood as the greatest symbol of women's transformation vhere "women were no longer veiled bearers of morality by visible paradigms of ffirmation of body and its sensual attributes".[191] Ellison Banks Findly is of the pinion that Nur Jahan's contribution towards the design of *Shalamar* is seen more learly in the functional division of the individual terraces, which made it a plan not ust for private pleasures, but for the discharge of imperial duties as well.[192] *Shalamar Bag* with it's all beautiful features was called *Farah-Baksh* (the bestowed of joy) in he Mughal days.[193]

Vernag, Kashmir

Jahangir and Nur Jahan are said to be found of *Vernag,* it is situated further outh-east of Srinagar (Shahabad). Prior to the Mughals it was a religious place for he Hindus. The rare beauty, seclusion and remoteness of *Vernag* made it a very pecial place for Jahangir and Nur Jahan. The name *Vernag* is derived from snake-vorship, an ancient religion of Kashmir. Jahangir writes: "The source of the *Bihat* is pring in Kashmir called the *Vir-nag;* in the language of India a snake is *Vir-nag.* Clearly there had been a large snake at that place".[194] As a whole *Vernag* was ertainly a very fascinating place. Jahangir felt that, "in the whole of Kashmir there is o sight of such beauty and enchanting character".[195]

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[189]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.256.
[190]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., pp. 256-57.
[191]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.257.
[192]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.257.
[193]. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens*..., p. 98. Also Muhammad Shafi, "The Shalimar Gardens of Lahor", in *Islamic Culture The Hyderabad Quarterly Review*, Hyderabad, 1927, Vol-I, p.63.
[194]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-I, p. 92.
[195]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-II, p. 174.

Achabal, Kashmir

About 8 km towards south of Srinagar, close to the old direct road from Jammu to Srinagar, where the valley of Kashmir abruptly ends and the great hills being to descend, is *Achabal.* In *Achabal* a beautiful garden by Nur Jahan and Jahangir, being a creation of Nur Jahan, *Achabal* was called *Begamabad* after her once upon a time.[196] Villers Stuart calls it "an ideal site", and adds, "If I were asked where the most perfect modern garden on a medium scale could be devised, I should answer without hesitation, *Achabal*".[197] *Achabal* was built around a powerful waterfall that rises out of Sosanwar hill.[198] The water fall is flanked by two small summer-houses. Below it are wide pools enliven by fountains with a pleasant island pavilion set within them. Below that the water again passes under a large force over the final change of level.[199] *Achabal* had earlier been an ancient Hindu site of worship named *Akshavala.*[200] Akbar in his days had visited *Achabal* often, which to him was a source of delight and religious refuge.[201] Jahangir and Nur Jahan were very found of *Achabal* and went there often.[202] To Jahangir, "it was a piece of paradise".[203]

Shahdara, Lahore

Lahore, the capital city of Jahangir and Nur Jahan, was another favourite place of the Mughal. Here too Nur Jahan laid several gardens along the river Ravi. Towards the north-west of Lahore, along with the river bank of river Ravi, at a distance of approx. 5 miles from Lahore, is found Nur Jahan's famous pleasure garden, called *Dilkusha* garden (garden of delight) and later named as *Shahdara,* where in Jahangir was buried after his death.[204] Nur Jahan designed Jahangir's garden tomb after the model of the garden tomb of her father Itimad-ud-Daula and her mother Asmat Bano at Agra.[205]

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196. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p.108.
197. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 191.
198. Findly, *Nur Jahan ...*, p.257.
199. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p.108.
200. Findly, *Nur Jahan ...*, p.257.
201. Findly, *Nur Jahan ...*, p.257.
202. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p.173.
203. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p.173.
204. Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise as a garden in Persia and Mughal India*, New York: George Braziller, 1979, p.128. Also C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 130.
205. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 131. Also Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p.131.

Shahdara gardens had enter through a *sarai* courtyard, having a *saraies* of rched alcoves around the walls where travellers, pilgrims, guards and servant would ave been able to rest overnight. [206] The garden is very large one, about 540 yards quare, extending to 60 acres.[207] "With fine interlocking patterns of raised causeways, anals and tanks, in which bricks, traditional in Lahore, has been beautifully used".[208] ight large *chabutras* are formed from a series of raised fountain tanks encircling the ıausoleum.[209] The canals are bordered by cypress trees and flowers. A narrow hannel running along the edge of the terrace watered the fruit trees in the plots.[210] ustomary barrages about four feet below.[211] Near Jahangir's tomb is built Nur Jahan ɔmb in a bare and simple grave amidst open fields. It was set on a square plinth. The *harbagh* was 400 yards square and contained the small palaces were she lived in.[212]

Iur Afza Garden, Kashmir

Inside the palace fort built by Akbar exists on the Hari Prabat hill to the west f Dal Lake, a small garden with a small building in it. On this first visit to Kashmir ahangir and Nur Jahan found it as a dilapidated condition. So, Jahangir along with ſutamid Khan made "every effort to put the little garden in order and repair the uildings".[213] A terrace of 32 yards square in three divisions was added for paintings ɔ be hung.[214] There were also very productive cherry trees in *Nur Afza* garden. With ıe purpose to irrigate these plants Jahangir also built a canal to bring extra water ıere in.[215] The garden, after its restoration, had a new name, *Nur Afza*[216] (Light ıcreasing). Most probably Nur Jahan Begum would have a great share in its ɛstoration. Here she patronised it hence after.[217]

ʾagh-i-Bahar Ara, Kashmir

6. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 130. Also Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p.131.
7. Fergusson James, *History...*, Vol-II, p.304.
8. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p. 131.
9. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 131.
0. Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise...*, p.128.
1. Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise...*, p. 128.
2. Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise...*, p.129.
3. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, pp. 150-51.
4. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p. 151.
5. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p. 238.
6. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, pp. 150-51.
7. Findly, *Nur Jahan ...*, p. 255. Also Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan...*, p.194.

The *Bagh-i-Bahar Ara* was built by Nur Jahan in 1623 A.D. on the western side of the Dal Lake at Sadurkhun;[218] but no longer exists totally. It had two terraces with excellent views of the water, one approaching the lake and the other on a higher level.[219] There was a stone pavilion in between the terraces.[220] These terraces were prepared in the *chahar chenar* pattern[221] which had four *chenar* trees planted evenly over a square plot to provide shade the whole day long.[222]

Darogha Bagh (Lalla Rookh's Garden), Manasbal Lake Kashmir

Among the many mountain gardens of Mughals, this place according to some historians was built for Nur Jahan. It was set on terraced walls and planted with poplar trees.[223] It justout into the calm water "like some great high-decked galleons"[224] a sort of protection against the ravaging floods of the reign.[225] The banks of the Manasbal are deserted now, the garden are in ruins. Only a few sportsmen, or hardy tourists, venture their boats up the narrow canal, and anchor in shadow of the old *chenars*.[226]

Nur Afshan Bagh

Babur got a garden called *Ram Bagh* built at Agra, but Jahangir gifted it to his Empress Nur Jahan. Later with some changes made by Nur Jahan it became famous with the name of *Nur Afshan Bagh* (light scattering garden). Jahangir called it *Gul Afshan Bagh* (flower scattering garden) when he visited it in 1619 A.D first time and rewarded a honourary title to its Persian keeper Dost Muhammad as 'khawaja Jahan'. Jahangir writes in *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* that, "On Wednesday, together with the ladies in a boat, I went to the *Nur Afshan* garden, and rested there at night; as the garden belonged to the establishment of Nur Jahan Begum".[227] It is situated on the left bank of the Jamuna River. Babur built a large well to supply water for his other people.[228]

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[218]. Chandra Pant, *Nur Jahan* ..., p. 116.
[219]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p. 255.
[220]. Pant, D, *Economic History of India under the Mughals,* Delhi: Kanishka Publishing House, 1990, p.117.
[221]. Pant, D, *Economic...*, p. 117.
[222]. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 159.
[223]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p. 255.
[224]. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 157.
[225]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p. 255.
[226]. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 158.
[227]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p. 199.
[228]. Findly, *Nur Jahan* ..., p.248.

During Jahangir's time this garden belongs to his queen Nur Jahan.[229] The original orderly and geometric patterns of the site remains, as do many of the water channels, the well, the platforms and the pavilions.[230] The *Nur Afshan* or *Ram Bagh* has the difference of being one of the oldest recognizable Mughal gardens in India.

Nur Manzil or Zahra Bagh

Babur built a garden *Nur Manzil* (abode of light), for one of his daughter named Zahra, which is famous today as the *Zahra Bagh* and is located just South of the *Ram Bagh,* alongside the eastern bank of the Yamuna River in Agra. Similarly, it went under the purview of Nur Jahan in Jahangir's reign and increased substantially. *Nur Manzil* garden was beautifully laid with its newly erected building, highly decorated residence, reservoirs, tanks, fountains, cascades, and a large well just outside the gate from where thirty-two pairs of bullocks continuously drew water to irrigate the plants and trees.[231] Jahangir had spent many happy days there. On one such visit he writes, "I passed the time in enjoyment in that rose-garden of delight".[232]

Moti Bagh, Agra

Moti Bagh (*Moti Mahal*) in Agra seems to have belonged to Nur Jahan Begum. Peter Mundy in his accounts speaks of *Derree ca Bagh* (*Dehra Bagh)* and King *Ecbars* (Akbar's) garden on the side of the river Jamuna and *Moti ca Bagh* on the other side of the river which was "built by Noore Mohol".[233] Pelseart also speaks of two gardens namely *Charbagh* and *Moti Mahal*, this being the *Moti Bagh.*[234]

Beside Nur Jahan, another female Aqa Aqayan, who served Emperor Jahangir for 33 years, built a garden, a *Sarai* and a tomb in Delhi.[235] Purhunar Bano Begum, elder daughter of Shah Jahan[236] buried in a mausoleum constructed in Delhi under her own direction. Which one of his daughters exactly bore this name cannot be said for sure.

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[229]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...,* Vol-II, p. 199. Also Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise...*, p.102.
[230]. Findly, *Nur Jahan...*, p. 249.
[231]. Findly, *Nur Jahan...*, p. 249.
[232]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...,* Vol-II, p. 98.
[233]. Peter Mundy, *The Travels...*, Vol-II, p.214.
[234]. Pelseart Francisco, *Jahangir's...*, p.5.
[235]. Jahangirn, *Tuzuk...,* Vol-I, p. 125.
[236]. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri,* English translation and annotated by Sir, Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1947, p. 90.

Jahan Ara

Jahan Ara and Roshan Ara like some of the royal Mughal ladies were actively involved in construction works. Jahan Ara Begum had a good architectural sense, and her contribution in the field of architecture was not confined to building her Mausoleum alone, but extended to the construction of gardens, places, mosques, *sarai,* monastery and market places.

Mosque

Princess Jahan Ara, popularly known as *Begum Saheb,* is known to have built a mosque in Kashmir valley. She had ordered to build a mosque in an artistic style, at the cost of 40,000 rupees (Figure No.2.6). The entire fund was provided by the princess herself.[237] Muhammad Salih tells us that she built a mosque and monastery at Srinagar for Mulla Badakhshi, a disciple of Mian Mir, the famous saint of the Punjab.[238] This mosque was surrounded by large buildings meant for the habitation of the poor, constructed at a further cost of rupees 20,000.[239] Khafi Khan too mentions this building and its cost.[240] Jahan Ara Begum also built another mosque in Agra, known as the *Jami Masjid.* It stands outside the Agra fort on the north-west direction. It was completed after five years of work in 1648 A.D, and had cost five Lakh rupees.[241] The first appearance of the minarets as part of the mosque building started with the mosque of Jahan Ara (Jami Masjid) at Agra.[242] She also built this mosque as her own allowances.[243] It is a fine structure of bold design, excellent finish and magnificent proportions. She wished it to bring her eternal and everlasting fame and reward in life hereafter.

Jahan Ara is said to have built a *Rabat* (monastery) too. Abdul Hamid mentioned a *Rabat* (monastery) erected by the princess Jahan Ara [244] at Hirapur in Kashmir, taking into consideration her religious bent of mind.

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[237]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.201.
[238]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.201.
[239]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.201.
[240]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-I, p.706.
[241]. Maulavi Mahbooburrahman Sahab Kaleem Aali Janab, *Jahan Ara*, Urdu, Published Aligarh, p.65.
[242]. S. Nadeem Ali Rezavi, "Medieval Indian Architecture: Its History and Evolution", in *Indian History Congress 73rd Session,* Mumbai 29 December 2012, p.21.
[243]. Lahori Abdul Hamid, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, p. 252.
[244]. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-II, Pt.II, p. 469.

Figure No.2.6: Mosque of Mulla Shah Badakhshi, Srinagar,

Catherine B.Asher, Architecture of Mughal India

Jahan Ara's Tomb

Jahan Ara Begum Tomb exists at the shrine of the Sufi saint Nizam-ud-Din Auliya in Delhi. This tomb is simple, yet revealing her artistic sense. Her white marble grave is open to the sky and had grass grown in a hollow on the top of the edifice (Figure No.2.7). This was done at her special request, and there are no other ornamentations on it, except a lily carved of precious jade, green in color.[245]

Caravansaries and Market Places

In Delhi after the foundation of new capital she built magnificent caravanserai. This building that does not exist any longer has been very highly admired by Bernier and Manucci, "this Princess Jahan Ara to preserve her memory gave orders for the construction of a *sarai* in the square, which is between the fortress and the city. This is the most beautiful *sarai* in Hindustan, with upper chambers adorned with many paintings, and it has a lovely garden, in which are ornamental reservoirs. In these *sarai* there put up none but great Mogul and Persian merchants. The King went to view the work that had been done for his beloved Begum Saheb, and he praised her energy and liberality".[246] Jahan Ara Begum also planned and supervises the building of the *Chowk Sarai Bazar* in Lahore.[247] She also built the famous *Chandni Chowk Bazar* near the Red Fort in Delhi.[248]

[245]. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, pp. 109-10.

[246]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, P. 221. Also Bernier, *Travels ...*, pp.280-81.

[247]. Muhammad Sualeh Kambu, *Amal-i-Saleh,* Gulam Yazdani (ed.), Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1939, Persian Vol-III, p.47.

[248]. Mulla Muhammad Sualeh, *Shahjahan Nama*, Urdu, New Delhi: Al Hasanat Books, 2008, pp.447-48.

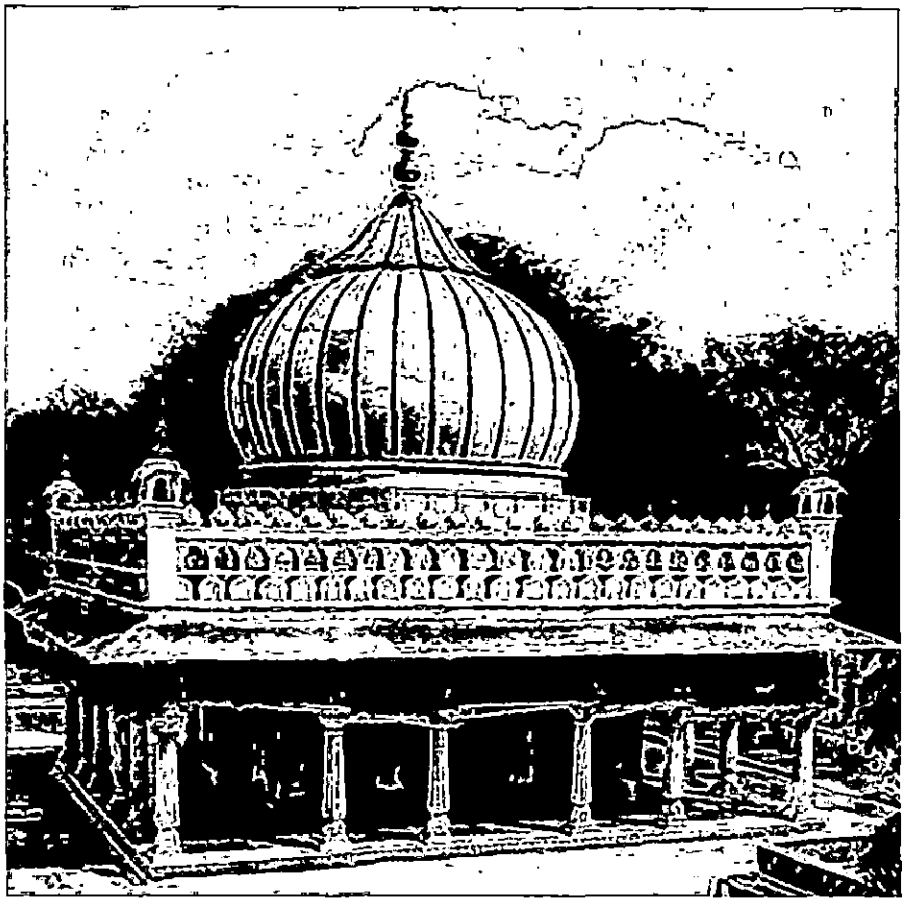

Figure No.2.7: Jahan Ara tomb

Jahan Ara Gardens

Jahan Ara loved gardens. She built many beautiful gardens in Kashmir named *Bagh-i-Jahan Ara*[249] designed by Jawahar Khan (Khawaja Sara),[250] *Bagh-i-Nur* or *Bagh-i-Nur Afshan* (constructed by Nur Jahan), *Bagh-i-Safa* (Srinagar),[251] and *Bagh-i-Aishabad.*[252] Another Kashmir garden, the *Bagh-i-Shahara* was given by Shahjahan to Jahan Ara.[253] She also owned a garden Ambala[254] and another in Surat[255] and also a garden in Bachchol which had many canals and a variety of trees.[256] Outside the Delhi gate on the northern side of *Chandni Chowk* she laid out a garden called *Begum Ka Bagh.*[257] It extended from the present National Club to the site where the *Lajpat Rai* Market is now. The *Begum Ka Bagh* had pools, water channels, fountains, canopies *(chhatris)* supported on 12 pillars of red sandstone *(baradari)* providing cool resting places and lots of flowers and fruit trees. The concluding part of *Pankhon ka Mela* meant for the ladies were celebrated here.[258] Also the *Tees Hazari* (Thirty Thousand) gardens outside Kashmir Gate that later became the jagir of Jahan Ara Begum.[259]

Azzun-Nisa Begum

One of Shahjahan's wives, Azzun-Nisa Begum (*Bibi Akbarabadi*)[260] built a garden in imitation of Kashmir and Lahore (*Shalimar)* garden. After her the place was known as Azzabad.[261] According to Muhammad Saleh's estimates, it took four years for completion and expenses about 2 Lakh rupees.[262] Azzun-Nisa Begum or *Bibi Akbarabadi* in her garden had combined all the various architectural beauties of the Kashmir gardens. The garden was formally opened in September 1650 A.D. on

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249. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Persian, Vol-II, pt.I, p.99.
250. Sualeh Kambu, *Amal-i-saleh,* Lahore: Mazlis Taraqqi-i-Adab, 1959, Vol-II, p.36.
251. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, pt-I, p.195.
252. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, pt-II, p. 27.
253. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-II, pt-I, p. 99.
254. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, pt-II, p. 7. Also Vol-II, pt-I, P.115.
255. Thevenot and careri, *Indian Travels...*, p.25. Also John Splinter Stavorinus, *Voyages to the East-Indies,* Eng tr. by Samuel Hull Wilcocke, London: G.G and J. Robinson, 1798, Vol-II, p.470.
256. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-II, pt-II, p. 428.
257. Maheshwar Dayal, *Rediscovering Delhi: The Story of Shahjahanabad, New* Delhi: S. Chand & Co, 1967, p.29.
258. Maheshwar Dayal, *Rediscovering...*, pp.29-31.
259. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir...*, p.275.
260. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p.146. Also C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p.103.
261. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 103.
262. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 105.

ccasion of some festival.[263] The garden hardly exists now, much of its valuable thing eing plundered by the end of the 18th century. She built a mosque in Faiz bazaar, amous as Akbar Abadi Mosque. The Mosque built red sandstone in 1649 A.D.[264] his mosque was not destroyed by the English in those days.

Both Fateh Puri Begum and Sirhindi Begum, from Fatehpur and Sirhind, are hahjahan's wives. They also built two mosques called Fateh Puri.[265] The Fatehpuri nosque in Chandni Chowk, and the Sarhindi mosque at Lahore Gate.[266] The atehpuri mosque was confiscated and the property attached to it was auctioned. This nosque was restored to the Muslim community as a place of worship in 1876, by the rmy authorities. Sirhindi Begum laid a garden also, adjacent to Roshan Ara Begum arden in Delhi.[267]

oshan Ara Begum

Roshan Ara Begum (Jahan Ara's sister) built well-known garden Tomb at elhi.[268] The mausoleum is beautiful, built in pure white marble with exquisite rnamentation on the exterior parts. It stands on a low wide platform in the centre of he upper terrace in the gardens still bearing her name (Figure No.2.8).[269] A raised anal bordered by flower beds and ornamented with a row of little fountains runs etween this building and the entrance gate.[270]

3. Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p. 148.
4. Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan...*, p.197.
5. Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan...*, p.197.
6. Maheshwar Dayal, *Rediscovering...*, p.71
7. Maheshwar Dayal, *Rediscovering...*, p.71
8. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p. 96. Also Crowe and Haywood, *The Gardens...*, p.184.
9. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 110.
0. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...*, p. 110.

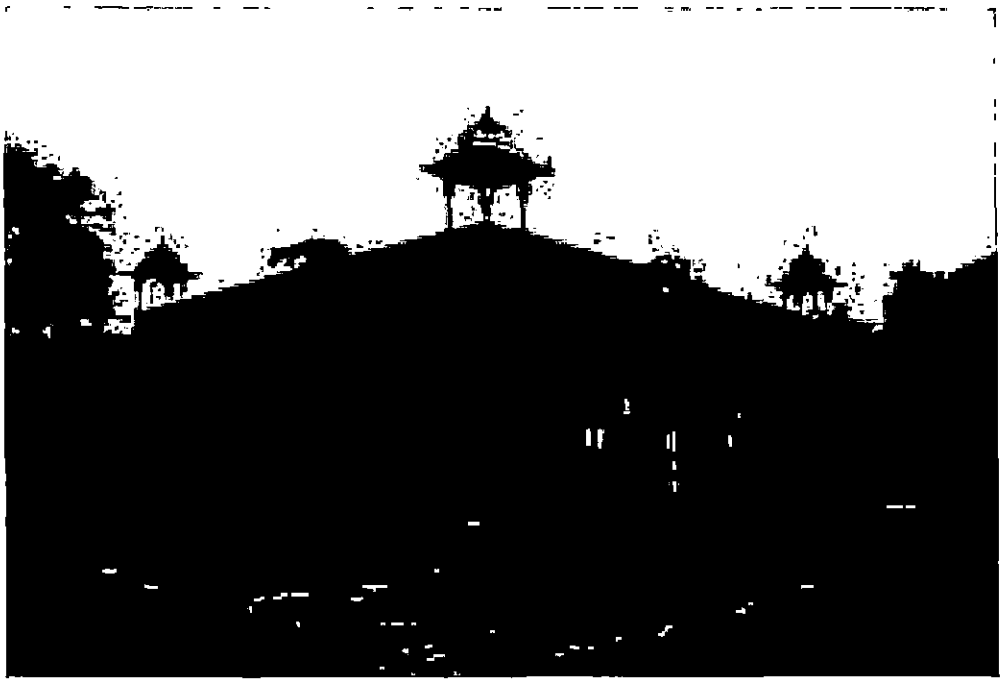

Figure No.2.8: Roshan Ara tomb

Zeb-un-Nisa Begum

Zeb-un-Nisa Begum *tomb*, Aurangzeb's daughter was not behind the other royal ladies in her garden building, as *Chauburgi,*[271] or four-towered, can still be traced by portions of the walls and gates remaining. Three of the turrets over the archway still stand; ornaments with tiles in patterns of cypress-trees and grooving flowers, and the gateways have inscriptions in Arabic and Persian.[272] She bestowed it on one of her friends and planned a second garden for herself in *Nawan Kot* (near Lahore). Here she was buried; by her special order the minarets of her mausoleum were built and carved to represent four slender marble palms (Figure No.2.9).[273] Her tomb was made of fine marble with gold. But according to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, she was "buried in the garden of 'Thirty Thousand Trees', outside the Kabuli gate".[274] Her tomb was later demolished for the construction of a railway line. Her coffin and inscribed tomb-stone are now in Akbar's mausoleum at Sikandra,[275] where the epitaph can still be read. But some other sources say that she was buried in the *Tees Hazari* (Thirty Thousand) gardens in Delhi, which belonged to Jahan Ara Begum and later became the Jagir of Zeb-un-Nisa Begum.[276]

Zinat-un-Nisa Begum

Zinat-un-Nisa Begum another daughter of Aurangzeb built a wonderful mosque, the *Zinat-ul-Masjid,* at her expenses in Delhi.[277] It is said that she demanded the amount of her dowry and instead of getting married, built a mosque (Figure No.2.10).[278] There in she was buried after death, but her grave was removed later somewhere else by the British Military authorities after they occupied the building.[279]

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271. M.P Srivastava, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1707),* Allahabad: Chugh Publication, 1875, p.121.
272. Zeb-un-Nisa, *Diwan...,* pp. 10-11.
273. C.M.V Stuart, *Garden...,* pp. 134-35.
274. Jadunath Sarkar, *History...,* Vol-I, p.69.
275. Jadunath Sarkar, *History...,* Vol-I, p.69.
276. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir...,* p.275.
277. Jadunath Sarkar, *History...,* Vol-I, p.70. Also Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan...,* p.217
278. Jadunath Sarkar, *History...,* Vol-I, pp. 62-70.
279. Jadunath Sarkar, *History...,* Vol-I, p.70.

Figure No.2.9: Tomb of Zeb-un-Nisa Begum http://pak101.com

She is known to have built around fourteen *caravansarais.*[280] Norris write about princess Zinat-un-Nisa Begum, "the princess had built fourteen *caravansarai* on the roads out of charity to poor travelers and merchants".[281] At the age of 37 Zinat-un-Nisa undertook a project to construct a number of inns on the highwa linking Oudh with Bengal. This effort of hers earned the praise of her father.[282] Thes inns were probably the caravanserais built by her.

During the time of Aurangzeb, one of his wives Nawab Bai, the mother o Muhammad Muazzam and Badr-un-Nisa, is said to have built a *sarai* at Fardapur an founded the place of Baijipura in this suburb of Aurangabad.[283]

[280]. Rekha Misra, *Women...*, p.112.

[281]. Harihar Das, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb (1699-1702 A.D)*, Condensed and arranged by S.C. Sarkar, Calcutta: Farma K.L Mukhopadhyay, 1959, p.236

[282]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.204.

[283]. Jadunath Sarkar, *History...*, Vol-I, p.63.

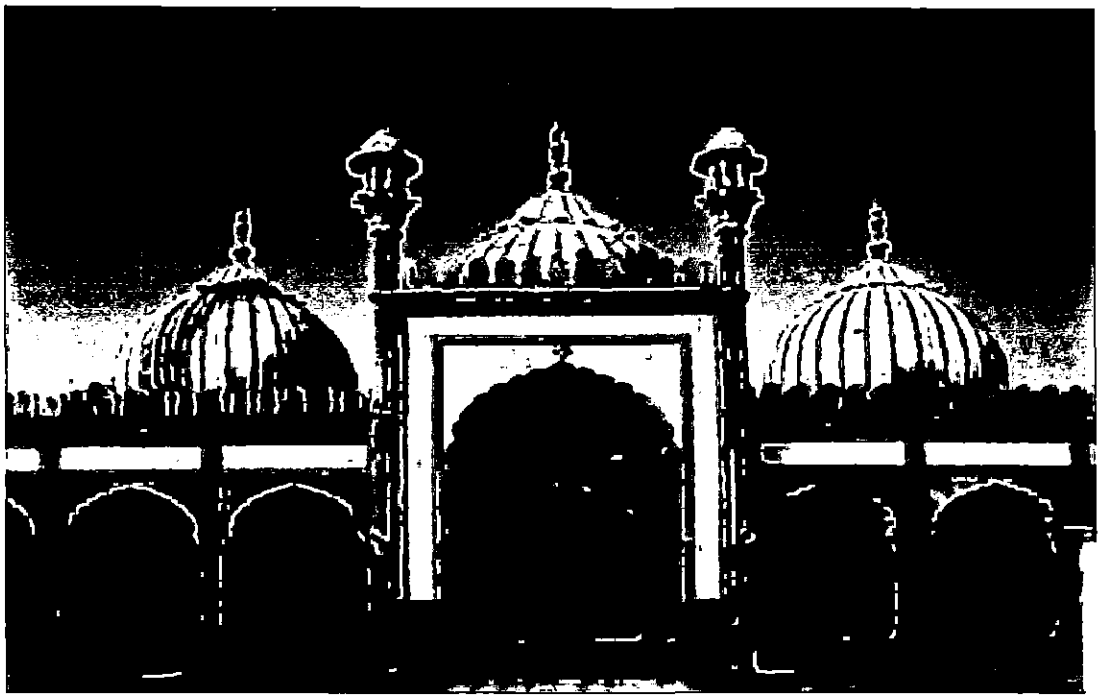

Figure No.2.10: Zinat-ul-Masjid

Figure No.2.9: Tomb of Zeb-un-Nisa Begum http://pak101.com

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[282]. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.204.

[283]. Jadunath Sarkar, *History...*, Vol-I, p.63.

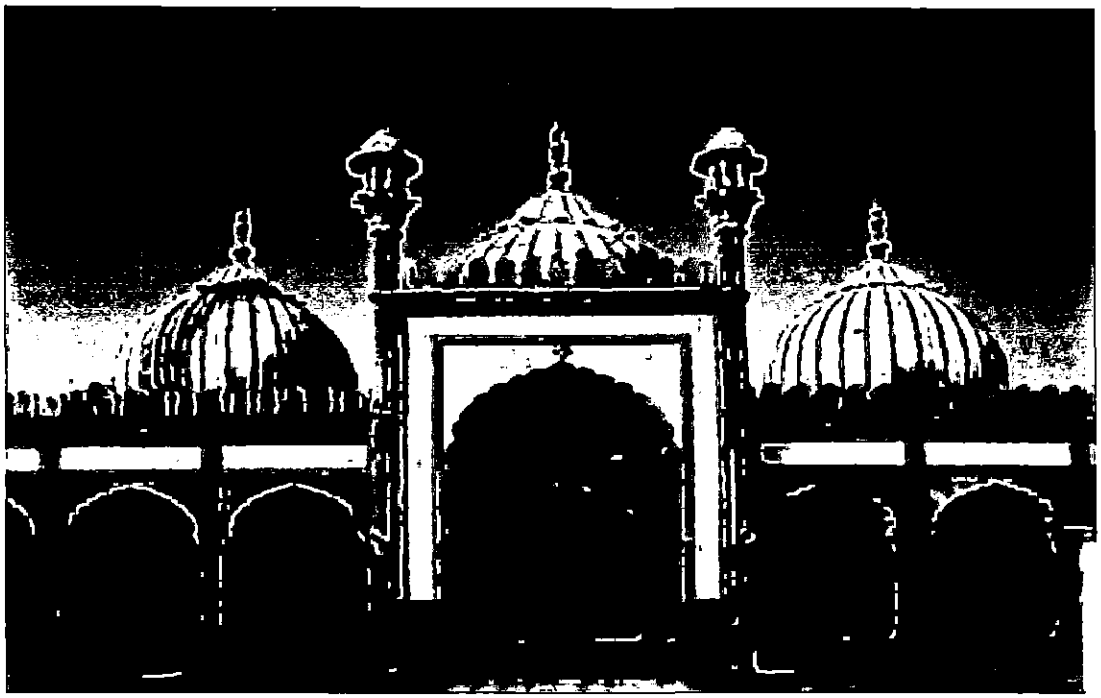

Figure No.2.10: Zinat-ul-Masjid

Chapter: 4

Women in Mughal India: Socio-Economic Perspective

The positions of women have been changing time to time. During ancient period women used to hold a respectable position in society. The position of women in the Indian society changed drastically with the arrival of Muslims. The social law and customs which came to be evolved in the changed set-up of things imprinted the women with the stigma of mental deficiency and created among them a profound sense of inferiority complex. Gradually, they came to be confined to participate in homely and domestic activities. The birth of a girl was not regarded as a glad tiding for the society. The women of the noble and royal families, though kept in seclusion, enjoyed a better position in comparison to the middle and lower class women. The position of women in the Indian society changed during the Mughal period. Mughal Empire not only witnessed the glorious achievements of its Emperors and princes, but also that of the princesses, queens and other ladies of the royal *harem*. The ladies of the Mughal period were almost as remarkable as their men and in certain cases even more cultivated. These beautiful, educated and extremely talented women contributed not only in the realm of culture, literature, art and artistic, but also in social and economic fields.

During the Mughal reign, the first lady of the empire was usually the Emperor's mother and not his chief queen because from the time of Babur all Mughal Emperors gave respect to their mothers, with the exception of except in the case of Nur Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal. The *Babur Nama* and *Humayun Nama*[1] bear many instances that explain the great honour and respect endowed to their mothers by Emperors, for example after the coronation ceremonies Emperors used to visit their mothers first even on their birth days or any other rapturous festival.[2] Only after the death of mother queen as his wife used occupy her position. Abul Fazl said that when long fasts came to an end, the first dishes of meat went to Akbar from his mother's palace.[3] Later on Hamida Bano Begum's place remained as Queen-mother in Akbar's government, and her *hukm* was containing the words as; *hukm-i-Maryam Zamani*

[1]. Gulbadan Begum, *Humayun Nama,* Eng tr. by Annette, S. Beveridge, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1902, pp.95, 110,112. Also Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Babur Nama or Tuzuk-i-Babri,* Eng tr. by Annette Susannah Beveridge, London: Luzac & Co, 1922, Vol-II, pp.475-476.

[2]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...,* p.95. Also Soma Mukherjee, *Royal Mughal Ladies and Their Contributions,* Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2001, pp.18-19

[3]. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari,* Eng tr. by H. Blochmann, Colonel D.C. Phillott (ed.), Delhi: Low Price Publications, First Published, 1927, 1949, Reprint, 2011, Vol-I, p.65.

long with the seal of a flower with eight petals.[4] At the Akbar's Court, Hamida Bano emained an active and influential center of the royal family life, far richer than ulbadan, though the Princess too was given continual gifts of money and jewels; Iamida Begum gave wonderful feasts at her house on every occasion, the happy amily event, the marriages of the princes, the births of the Emperor's grandchildren. he was the right person to stage-manage the settlement between her son and randson, the present and future Emperors.[5] Once when Akbar's mother was avelling in a palanquin from Lahore to Agra, Akbar was travelling with her. At one lace he took the palanquin upon his own shoulders and carried her from one side of ie river to another.[6] At one place in *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri,* Jahangir reveals his love and espects to his mother in these words: "on the same day, his Majesty the revered Maryam-uz-Zamani (his mother) came from Agra, and I acquired eternal good fortune om the blessing of waiting on her".[7] The daughters of the Mughal family or the Mughal princesses occupied places of great honour in the seraglio. The birth of a girl i those days was not welcome as happily as that of a boy. But the Mughal Emperors oved their daughters a lot and made the best arrangements for their education and ultivation of their talents. Abul Fazl writes, "two and a half months after prince alim, in November 1569, a daughter was born in Akbar's *harem*". The girl was amed Khanum, and Akbar "ordered rejoicings".[8]

In the Mughal *harem* there were found quite a few foster mothers beside the eal mother. Many times a child was separated from the real mother and therefore was ooked after and even breast fed by other women of the *harem.* There were also other urses who were not wet nurses. All nurses were given high rank in the *harem* and nown by the name of Anagas. The most well-known nurse at the time of Akbar was Maham Anaga who played an important political role during the initial years of Akbar's reign.[9] Some of these nurses of Akbar was Jiji Anagah, the wife of Shams-

S.A.I Tirmizi, *Edicts from the Mughal Harem,* Delhi: Idarah-i- Adbiyat-I, 2009, pp. xix-xx.
Rumer Godden, *Gulbadan (Portrait of a rose Princess as Mughal Court),* New York: Viking Press, 1981, pp.148-50.
Thomas Coryat, *Early Travels in India (1583-1619),* Foster William (ed.), London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1921; p.278.
Nur-ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangir,* Eng tr by Alexander Rogers, Henry Beveridge (ed.), First Published, 1909, 1914, Reprint Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2006, Vol-II, p.68.
Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama,* Eng tr by H.Beveridge, New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1979; Vol-II, p.509. Also Ruby Lal, *Early Mughal World,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.187.
Abul Fazl, *Akbar...,* Vol-II, p.230. Also Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...,* p.19.

ud-din; Fakhar-un-Nisa, the wife of Nadim Koka; Koki Anaga the wife of Togh Begi, Piji Jan Anaga the mother of Saadat Yar Koka, Daya Bhaval, Anaga, Bhaval Anaga, Hakimeh, Bibi Rupa, Khaldar Anaga and Piji-jan Anaga, etc.[10] Akbar was very found of Maham Anaga and Jiji Anaga. The Mughal Emperoralso respected their foster mothers a lot.

Purdah

The term '*purdah*' means a curtain or something to screen off; popularly, it applied to the 'veil'. The *purdah* system in all probability was unknown in ancient India.[11] It's general adoption, according to Dr. Altekar, "is subsequent to the advent of Muslim rule in India".[12] Prior to the advent of Muslim, Hindu women did not observe *purdah* but under the Islamic influence even the upper class Hindu women prefer to remain confined to their houses.[13] *Purdah* was generally observed by the Muslim women, and also by some sections of the Hindu women, mostly those belonging to the upper and well-to-do classes. The vast mass of peasant women did not wear any shroud or veil of a specific kind and they did not confine themselves to their houses.[14] Girls begin to observe this seclusion when they come to the age of puberty, or slightly earlier, and they adhere to the custom throughout the prime of her life until they pass the age of child-bearing. When they grow old, they need not continue this seclusion, but by that time, an age-long observation of this practice makes it more comfortable for them to live in the familiar surroundings of the house than go out in public.[15] European travellers have recorded that 'women in India, especially the Muslim women, observed strict *purdah'*. English traveller, J. Ovington wrote, "all the women of fashion in India are close penn'd in by their jealous Husband, who forbids them the very sight of all Strangers. However the watch is neither so careful, nor their modesty so blameless, but that they sometimes will look abroad for variety, as their roving

[10]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp.185, 122. Also Ruby Lal, *Early...*, pp.191-92. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.19.

[11]. Anant Sadashiv Altekar, *The position of women in Hindu Civilization,* Banaras: Motilal Banarsidas, 1956, p.206.

[12]. A.S Altekar, *The position...*, p.206. Also Chopra .P.N, *Some Aspects of Society and Culture during the Mughal age 1526-170,* Agra: Shiv Lal Agarwala & Co. Educational Publisher, 1955, p. 104.

[13]. Gulfishan Khan, "Social Status of Women in Medieval India- A comparative perspective", in *Khuda Bakhsh Library Journal,* Vol, 134, Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Oct-December, 2013, p.26.

[14]. P.N Ojha, *Glimpses of Social life in Mughal India*, New Delhi: Classical Publications, 1979, p.62.

[15]. Muhammad Ashraf Kunwar, *Life and Condition people of Hindustan*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1970, p.171.

Husband do".[16] De Laet, for example, refers to the system of veil among the Muslim women thus, "The Mohammedan women do not come out into public unless they are poor or immodest; they veil their heads and draw their hair forward in a knot from the back.[17] In Muslims the men did not like their wives seeing their own brothers and fathers except in their own presence. According to Manucci the Muslims were so "extra-ordinary distrustful" in this matter that they did not "permit their women to appear before them (their own brothers)".[18] Careri observed: "The Mohammedan women did not appear in public, except only the vulgar sort and the lewd ones".[19]

In Mughal India *purdah* was mainly observed by all classes of Muslim ladies with slight differences. Hamilton writes, "The Mohammedan women always go veiled when they appear abroad".[20] Ladies of the upper class society strictly observed *purdah* and none could see the toes of their feet. In fact *purdah* came to be considered as a measure of respectability among higher classes. Even a liberal king like Akbar had to issue the orders: "If a young women was found running about the streets and bazaars of the town and while so doing did not veil herself or allowed herself to become unveiled... she to go to the quarters of the prostitutes and take up the profession".[21] *Purdah* was strictly observed that even doctors, being males, were not allowed to see and touch a women patient. Manucci writes that, "the Mohammedan are very touchy in the matter of allowing their women to be seen and even touched by the hand".[22] The women rarely went out and they moved in covered palanquins. Usually the practice of high class Muslim ladies who discarded the *purdah* were not

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16. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*, H.G. Rawlinson (ed.), London: Oxford University Press & Humphrey Milford, 1929, reprint, New Delhi: Asian educational Services, 1994, p.127.
17. Ovington, *A Voyage...*, p. 63. Also De Leat, *Description of India and Fragment of the Empire of the Great Mughal,* Eng tr. by J. S. Hoyland and Annotated by S.N. Banerjee, Bombay: D. B Taraporevala Sons and Co, 1928, p.80.
18. Niccolao Manucci, *Storia-do-Mogor,* Eng tr. by William Irvine, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street Government of India; 1907, Vol-II, p.352.
19. Thevenot and Careri, *Indian Travels of Thavenot and Careri,* Surendranath Sen (ed.), New Delhi: The National Archives of India Queensway, 1949, p.248.
20. Alexander Hamilton, *A New account of the East-Indies,* First Publication London, 1739, New Delhi: Second edition, Asian Educational Services, 1995, Vol-I, p.163.
21. Abdul Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Mavlavi Ahmad Ali (ed.), Calcutta: Collage Press, 1868, Persian, Vol-II, pp.391-92. Also Eng tr. by W.H.Lowe, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat, 2009, Vol-II, p.405. Also K.N Chitnis, *Socio-economic History of Medieval India*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2005, p.88.
22. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.209.

favoured, but there are instances of queens like Nur Jahan not observing *purdah* and going out in public without *purdah.*[23]

The higher sections of Hindu women also seemed to have observed *purdah* strictly. A milder and less elaborate form of *purdah,* commonly known as "*Ghoonghat*" seemed to have been observed by the Hindu women of the well-to-do classes, and it appeared to have continued in Bengal later in the mid of the 18th century.[24] Muslim women of middle class families also observed *purdah.* undoubtedly some sort of *purdah* in the shape of *ghoonghat* was observed in India even before the advent of the Muslims but the existing elaborate and institutionalized from of *purdah* emerged from Muslims tradition.[25] The chief reason for adopting *purdah* by the Hindu women was to protect beautiful young Hindu girls from the ill-designs of rich nobles.

Marriage

Any specific age for marriage was not fixed. As a general rule girls were married at an early age in both the communities, Hindus and Muslims, usually girls of middle and lower classes were not given much education. In view of the prevailing circumstances girls were married at an early age of 7 or 8 years.*viz.*[26] Even before the age of puberty. This naturally implied that the section of the bride or bridegroom was made by the parents and there was no custom of seeing the girls before settling the marriage. It is remarkable to mention that in urban areas, marriages of Muslim girls were mostly celebrated when they reached the age of twelve or thirteen. So Terry refers, "they marry for the most part at the age of twelve or thirteen".[27] But if the parents of a girl could easily secure a suitable match, they preferred to get her married at a tender age; they were mostly left in their paternal home after *nikah*[28] ceremony till the marriageable age. The *nikah* was performed by the *qazi* as an officiated

[23]. S.C. Raychaudhary, *Social Cultural and Economic History of India (Medieval Period),* New Delhi: Surjeet Publication, 1997, p.58.

[24]. P.N Ojha, *Glimpses* ..., p. 63.

[25]. S.C Raychaudhary, *Social Cultural*..., p. 58.

[26]. S.C Raychoudhary, *Social Cultural*..., p.59.

[27]. Edward Terry, *Early Travels in India (1583-1619),* Foster William (ed.), London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921 pp.320-321.

[28]. Thomas Patrick Hughes, *A Dictionary of Islam,* New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2004, Vol-II, p.447. "A word which, in its literally sense signifies conjunction, but which in the language of the law implies of the marriage contract".

authority was supposed to maintain a record of all the marriages.[29] The *mehar* always formed an important part in Muslim marriage. It was usually fixed before the marriage. The settlement of the *mehar* was followed by the *nikah* (marriage) to be performed only after procuring the formal consent of the bride through an agent, with two persons acting as witness. The actual marriage ceremony and *rukhsati* were performed when the bride and the bridegroom had attained the age of puberty.[30]

Child Marriage:

During the Mughal age the evil practice of marriage at an early age was usually observed by the Indian Muslims. Child marriage had become a popular feature of the social life in the Mughal period. In imperial families, however, marriages were solemnized when the girls completed the age of thirteen or fourteen and boys fifteen or sixteen. Babur's daughter Gulrang's marriage was celebrated in 1503 A.D. with Isan Timur on completion of her fifteenth year.[31]Likewise, another daughter, Gulchihra's marriage to Tukhta Bugha Khan was celebrated when she was fourteen years.[32] Gulbadan Begum's marriage was also contracted with Khizr Khawaja Khan not prior to fourteen years.[33] Arjumand Bano Begum was married to Shahjahan, when she was more than 19 years old.[34]

Manucci also recorded that young princes were brought up in the palace, up to the age of 16 years and then they were to be married.[35] In this connection some marriages were performed at earlier age also. Babur's first marriage to Ayisha Sultan was approximately conducted at the age of eleven.[36] Bakhshi Banu Begum, daughter of Humayun and Gulwar Bibi, was given in marriage to Ibrahim when she was ten years old.[37]

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[29]. Pushpa Suri, *Social Condition in Eighteenth Century Northern India,* Delhi: University Publication Division, 1977, p. 86.

[30]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-III, pp.58-59.

[31]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.232.

[32]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p. 231.

[33]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p. 31.

[34]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara,* Eng tr. by H. Beveridge, Revised by Baini Prashad, Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1979, Vol-I, p.294.

[35]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.347.

[36]. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Babur Nama or Tuzuk-i-Babri,* Eng tr. by A.S. Beveridge, London: Luzac & Co, 1922, Vol-I, p.120.

[37]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.214.

Nevertheless, the prevalent system of child marriage was not an admirable act in society. Abul Fazl explained, "In the extensive country of India men are active to form this union at a tender age, and this introduces the leaven of evil".[38] So this evidence evinces the obstacles in the way to girl's progress, prosperity, the development of her mind and physical stability. The evil resulted in the practice of child marriage did not escape the keen eyes of Akbar. He constituted the laws in this connection to check the practice in question. Abul Fazl writes, "He abhors marriages which take place between men and women before the age of puberty. They bring forth no fruits and his Majesty thinks them even hurtful, for afterwards, when such a couple ripens into manhood, they dislike having connation and their home is desolate".[39] As the children born of early marriages were generally weak, he forbade girls before fourteen and boys before sixteen years age to be married.[40] But in spite of the strict rule and regulations of Akbar's, the system of child marriage could not be uprooted fully and continued at later period.

Unmatched Marriage:

There is no denying the fact that the unmatched marriages were the worst of all marriages. Money played a taxing role in settling the marriage between persons of unequal ages or social status.[41] Sometimes for the sake of wealth a young man would marry a woman older than himself. The Muslim girls of the period realized this evil-tradition and tried always to avoid such marriages. But they could not escape from this evil. EmperorAkbar was not in favour of this type of marriage and he proclaimed a decree that a man could not marry a girl more than twelve years younger to him and vice versa.[42] This shows that coming to the age of Akbar unmatched marriage was a common vice. Akbar for the first time, therefore, tried to check this bad system by enforcing this law in the country. Unmatched marriages were never contracted voluntarily by both the parties; in some cases we find some social pressure imposed on the temptation given to a poor victimized girl. Therefore poor young girls married

[38]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-III, p.791.
[39]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.287, and Vol-III, p.448.
[40]. Abdul Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh,* Eng tr. by W.H. Lowe, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat, 2009, Vol-II, p.315.
[41]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-III, p.55.
[42]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-III, p.405.

rich old men. It was only the money factor which played an important role in fixing this type of marriage.[43]

During the Mughal period, sometimes, political enmities were bound to end on account of fresh settlement of marriage between two parties. Babur married Mubarika Bibi, in the condition that he would not attack on Yusuf Zai tribe she belongs to.[44] Later on Babur gave his sister Khanzada Begum in marriage to Shahi Beg Khan Shaibani, when he captured Samarkand from Babur, in order to bring peace and a lasting alliance between Babur and Shaibani.[45]

In royal household also such types of marriages were prevalent a common phenomenon political consideration and show as a mark of distinction. Few Mughal Emperors preferred brides from Rajput families to gain. Akbar himself got married with Bihari Mal's daughter.[46] His son Jahangir married the daughters of Jagat Singh,[47] Raja Bhagwan Das[48] and Raja Uday Singh.[49] Dara's son Sulaiman Shukhoh was tied in the bridal knot with the daughter of Rao Amar Singh Rathor.[50] But the Mughal Emperors did never give their sisters and daughters in marriage to any one outside the religion and the royal family. One account of this religious mindset (during the reign of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb) the Mughal princesses were either left unmarried or their matches were established within the royal household. With this view the marriage of the other girls of imperial dignity was not observed or considered significant to achieve political reunion.[51] Thus, for example in 1672, Murad's daughter, Aisha Banu was married to Muhammad Salih, a noble belonging to a Persian family, received a robe, a horse with gold trappings and a female elephant.[52]

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[43]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-III, p.55.

[44]. Babur, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p. 245. Also Zinat Kausar, *Muslim Women in Medieval India,* Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1992, p. 20.

[45]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.85.

[46]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-I, p.113.

[47]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.145.

[48]. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, p.352. Also Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-Al-Lubab,* Urdu tr. by Muhammad Ahmad Farooqi, Karachi: Nafees Academy, 1963, Vol-I, pp.213, 257.

[49]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-I, pp.257-258.

[50]. Kalika-Ranjan Qanungo, *Dara Shukoh,* Calcutta: S.C Sarkar & Sons, 2nd Edition, 1952, pp. 120-122.

[51]. M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb,* Department of History Aligarh Muslim University, New Delhi: Asian Publishing House, 1970, p.143.

[52]. Saqi Must'ad Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri,* Eng tr. by Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1947, p.73. M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal...*, p.143.

Dowry

Dowry was demanded and sometimes parents disregarded the suitability of the match and cared primarily for a rich dowry. The marriage of the girls was sometimes a difficult problem because of the custom of dowry (*dahej*). In some castes and localities the bridegroom had to pay money to the bride's guardians. Dower or *mehar* has been regarded as an essential ingredient of a Muslim marriage without which no marriage is considered to be lawful in Islam.[53] Dower means a certain sum of money paid by the bridegroom to the bride immediately after *nikah*. The system of giving *mehar* (dower) is an ancient custom traced back to the pre-Islamic era in Arabia, where a price for a bride was paid at the time of marriage. So far as the fixation of amount of dower is concerned, Islam has not specified any limit on this account and the only object is to make the wife economically and financially sound so that she may not find herself helpless against her husband.[54]

Among royalty and nobility, the fixing of a very high dower (*Mehar*) was customary which, usually, was according to the status of the brides' families. Dowry system was rigorously observed in Mughal India. Abul Fazl noted that Akbar highly disapproved of this practice,[55] and he further mentioned that the Brahmans of the time did not at all follow this practice of dowry.[56] Badaoni notes "that Raja Bhagwan Das paid two crores of *tankas* (rupees), horses, elephants, golden vessels set with jewels, golden utensils, etc. all in huge amount- when his daughter got married to prince Salim".[57] Jahangir, when he contracted marriage with Mehrun-Nisa assigned eighty lakhs of asharfis of five misqals which was of the value of 7 crores and 20 lakhs of rupees.[58] In Shahjahan's marriage with Arjumand Bano Begum the dower was fixed at Rs. 5 lakhs. Like-wise in Dara's marriage with sultan Parwez's daughter, Nadira Bano Begum's, *Mehar* was 5 lakhs rupees.[59] In Aurangzeb's marriage with Dil-ras-Bano Begum, daughter of Shah Nawaz Khan Safvi, the amount of dower was 4 lakhs

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[53]. *Mishkat Sarif*, Urdu translation by Maulana Abdurrahman Kandhalvi, Karachi: Darul Ishaat, Vol-II, pp.110-11. Also The Holy Quran says, If the intention of a husband is not to pay the dower, the marriage is void", Text IV, Surah IV, Verse-III-IV.

[54]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, pp.286-87.

[55]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol.I. p.288.

[56]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-III, p.339.

[57]. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, p.352.

[58]. Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir, *Memoirs of Emperor Jahangir*, Eng tr. by Major David Price, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1918, p. 27.

[59]. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, pp.453-454.

rupees.[60] Not only among royal families and noblest but commoners also it was the general practice to fix a handsome amount of dower. The idea behind the high dowers was to check the possibilities of divorces in society. EmperorAkbar was also of the belief that the fixing up of high amount in dower was a preventive measure against rash divorces.[61]

The amount of Dover could be paid immediately after *Nikah* or at any time in course of married life. In fact, dower was the first claim of a wife over her husband's property and was a debt the husband owed to his wife. Generally the amount paid by royalty and nobility at the time of marriage contract,[62] was known as *Mehar Muajjal* or prompt dower.[63] And the other dower not paid at the time of the *Nikah*, was called *Mehar Muwajjal* or deferred dower,[64] which could be demanded by wife at any time or the husband could also pay it whenever he liked.

Divorce

If the husband and wife did not please each other and all sincere efforts made for reconciliation failed, they could get legally separated and be free to marry again. Divorce was not a common practice among the Hindus, but among the lower classes both marriage and divorce were casual affairs. Divorce is lawful in Islam because marriage is regarded as a civil contract rather than a sacrament of divine origin, and so the nuptial tie may be severed. Among Muslim too divorce was easy, because marriage was only a civil contract, not a sacrament. The contract could be terminated instantly and irrevocably by the husband pronouncing *talaq* (divorce) thrice in succession. [65] But there were also more cautious forms of divorce among Muslims, which took effect only after a three-month period of separation, during which the process could be aborted. Women too could divorce her husband, but in that case she

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[60]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-II, Part-II, pp.768-69.

[61]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p. 288. Also *Tarikh-i-Hind,* is a selected article from 'Risala Jamana Kanpur', by Diya Narayan Nigam from 1903-1942, (Urdu), Published by Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Public Library, 1993, p.62.

[62]. Jahangir, *Memoirs...*, p.27.

[63]. Sulaiman Haieem, *New Persian-English Dictionary*, Librairie-Imprimerie Beroukhim, 1972, Vol-II, p.1033. Also Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.288.

[64]. Sulaiman Haieem, *New Persian-English Dictionary*, p.1033. Also Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.288.

[65]. *Encyclopeadic Dictionary of Medieval India (MIrat-ul-Istilah),* Forwarded by Z.A.Desai, Translated by Tasneem Ahmad, Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1993, p.294. *Talaq:* it implies the divorce or abandon.

had to give back the *mehr*. Divorce by mutual consent was also prevalent. The divorce amongst the Shias was more regulated than amongst the Sunnis.

In Mughal India, the system of divorce was prevalent in Muslim society, but was looked upon with extreme disapproval by wise and honorable persons. During the Mughal age, in regard to divorce, a man had greater rights than a woman and could divorce his wife even against her will. During Akbar's time, the mother of Saif Khan Koka was threatened by her husband that if she would give birth to a girl this time also (as she always did) she would be divorced by him. The lady, who was very faithful to her husband and never wanted to be separated from him, complained of this to Akbar's mother.[66] But in course of time a son was born who was named Saif Khan Koka. During the reign of Jahangir, Asaf Jah's Misri Begum was married to Jarullah, son of Asaf Khan, but out of congruity the marriage had never been consummated. At this Jahangir ordered Jarullah to divorce his wife so that she could remarry and could be saved from mental torture.[67] Gulbarg Begum, daughter of Nizamuddin Ali Barlas was married to Mir Shah Husain but the alliance was not happy and a separation took place which resulted in divorce.[68] It was an open fact that if the differences between husband and wife became acute and all possible attempts failed there was no remedy other than to divorce.

Thus if a man, either according to his will or against his will or by force of others, repeated the word '*Talaq*' (Divorce) thrice, divorce took legal[69] effect, as is the practice even today; with this the relationship between husband and wife ceased. Abdul Wasi, after divorcing his wife left the city and went to Bidar to try to forget the memory of his past life.[70] After divorce a women had to live a life of seclusion and abstain from all luxuries for three months, and this specified period was called *'Iddat'*, which extended in case of a pregnant lady. During that period ladies avoid all those that were used to beautify themselves. She was also forbidden to go out of her house, except under unavoidable circumstances, and that too only during the day time. In this specific period she was forbidden to marry another man. All the above mentioned conditions were strictly observed by the Muslim ladies of the Mughal age,

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66. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.375.
67. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-II, Part-II, p.819.
68. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.230. (Appendix A).
69. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, pp. 59-60.
70. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II , pp. 59-60.

as they were religious injunctions. [71] The wife also demands a separation on the ground of ill usage, and certain other cases. In such cases an agreement entered into for the purpose of dissolving marriage was known as '*Khula*' and was prevalent in Mughal period.[72] Following this practice, *'Khula'* the wife had to give back her *Mehar* or any other additional sum proposed by the husband.

Polygamy

Polygamy was a practice prevalent both among the Hindus and the Muslims, especially among the richer section of the society. Normally, a man had only one wife, but those with adequate economic stability could afford to indulge in the extravagant luxury of maintaining a number of wives. The common man whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim, could not marry more than one woman and his wife usually had no rivals in her home. The Quran, no doubt, permits a Muslim to marry four wives[73] at a time, but monogamy seems to have been the rule among the lower stratum of society in both communities, Hindus and Muslim. Islam permitted a man to marry up to four wives, with the condition to maintain equality among them to the least possible way. If he fails in treating them equally he must marry so that none of them had reason to feel neglected. The Holy Quran says, "Marry two, three and four women if you are unable to maintain equality marry only one".[74] A Shia could marry more than four wives at a time.[75]

During the Mughal period, polygamy was prevalent among both the upper and lower classes of Muslim society,[76] though ordinarily it was not encouraged. People of lower classes were normally monogamists, and their wives usually had no rivals in their homes. But those with adequate economic stability could afford to indulge in the extravagant luxury of maintaining several wives. Mostly polygamy was the privilege

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[71]. Mrs.Meer Hasan Ali, *Observations, on the Mussulmans of India (Manner, Customs, Habits and Religious opinions)*, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-I, 1973, Vol-I, p.46.

[72]. Abdul Qadir Badaoni, *Muntakha-ut-Tawarikh,* Translated and edited by Sir Wolsely Haig, Patna: Academical Asiatica, 1973, Vol-III, p.147.

[73]. *Quran instructs.* "Marry whatever women you like three and four" Text IV, Surah IV, Verses III. Also Chopra P.N, *Some Aspect of Society and Culture During the Mughal Age 1526-1707,* Forwarded A.L,Srivastava, Agra: Shava Lal Agarwala, 1955, p.109.

[74]. Syed Ameer Ali, "The Modernity of Islam", in *Islamic Culture The Hyderabad Quarterly Review,* Hyderabad: 1927, Vol-I, pp.3-4. Also *The Holy Quran Says*: Text IV, Surah IV, Verses IV.

[75]. B.R.Verma and S.R Bakshi (eds), *Encyclopaedic Survey of Medieval India (Administration and Society in Medieval India),* New Delhi: Ajay Verma for Commonwealth Publisher, 2004, p.39.

[76]. Thevenot and Careri, *Indian Travels...,* p.117.

of the rich classes most of whom kept 3 or 4 wives at a time. As it was not possible for a single husband to keep his wives happy in every respect. Usually polygamy leads to domestic unhappiness and immorality. Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka's well-known proverb deserves mention. He used to say that "a man should marry four wives, a Persian to have somebody to talk to; a Khurasani woman for his housework; a Hindu woman for nursing his children; and a woman of Mawarannahr to have someone to whip as a warning for the other three."[77] Abul Fazl, referring to the Hindu writes, "excepting in the king, it is not considered right for a man to have more than one wife" it is not considered right for a man to have more than one wife, unless the first wife is sickly or proves barren, or her children die. In these cases he marry ten wives, but if tenth proves defective, he may not marry again.[78]

Babur, the first Mughal Emperorhad married seven wives. They were Aisha Sultana Begum, Zainab Sultana Begum, Maham Begum, Masuma Sultana Begum, Gulrukh Begum, Dildar Begum, Mubarika Bibi.[79] Humayun also had many legal wives. Among them was Bega Begum, later on called Haji Begum, Bibi Gonoor, Chand Bibi, Shad Bibi, Gulbarg Begum, Mewa Jan, Hamida Bano Begum.[80] Abul Fazl has mentioned that Akbar had the fallowing queens: Ruqayya Sultana Begum a daughter of Mirza Hindal, Salima Sultana Begum, a daughter of Raja Bihari Mal, the first wife of Abdul Wasi, Bibi Daulat Shad, a daughter of Abdullah Khan Mughal, a daughter of Miran Mubarak Shah of Khandesh,[81] Qasima Bano, the daughter of Arab Shah entered the royal *harem* a daughter of Qazi Isa, a daughter of Shamsuddin Chak.[82]

Jahangir also had several wives but four among them were the chief ones. Hawkings states, "He had three hundred wives whereof four are chief as queens to say the first named Padshah Bano, the second is called Nur Mahal and the third is the daughter of Hakim Hamaun".[83] Other wives of Jahangir were a daughter of darya

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77. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.346. Also P.N Chopra, *Some Aspect...*, p.110.
78. Abul Fazl, *Ain,-i-Akbari*, Eng tr. by Colonel H.S. Jarrett, First Published, 1927, 1949, Reprint Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2011, Vol-III, p.341. Also P.N Ojha, *North Indian Social Life During Mughal Period*, Delhi: Oriental Publisher and Distributers, 1975, p.132
79. Gulbada, *Humayun...*, pp.28, 233,256,266.
80. Gulbada, *Humayun...*, pp.85, 204,320,263,282,218.
81. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, pp.321-322.
82. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-III, p.167. Also *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.686.
83. William Hawkins, *Early Travels...*, p. 100.

Malbhas, a sister of Mirza Muzaffar Husain, Nur-un-Nisa[84] and Malika-i-Jahan, a daughter of the ruler of Khandesh.[85]

Shahjahan was also polygamous like his father and married many women like Qandhari Mahal, Arjumand Bano Begum, a daughter of Shah Nawaz Khan, Akbaradi Mahal[86], Fatepuri Mahal, Sarhindi Begum. Aurangzeb married more than four; he married one or two only after the death of his existing queens thus making the number four at a time. The legal wives of Aurangzeb are mentioned as such Dildar Bano, a daughter of King Raju of Rajori in Kashmir, given the name Rahmat-un-Nisa, Udaipuri Mahal, Hirfa Bai also called Zainabadi Mahal, Dil'aram and Daulatabadi Mahal are recorded as belonging to Aurangzeb's *harem*.[87]

Akbar was himself polygamous yet he was a great supporter of monogamy.[88] Abul Fazl says, "Nor does His Majesty approved of every one marrying more than one wife; for this ruins a man's health and disturbs the peace of home".[89] Akbar criticise old women who take young husbands, and says that doing so is against all humility of manners.[90] Badaoni also refers to Akbar's introduction of monogamy that people should not have more than one legal wife, unless he had a child. In another case the rule should be one man and one woman.[91]

In spite of social reform, the practice of polygamy continued among the affluent Muslims as Monserrate says, "He also invented and introduced amongst the *Musalmans* two forms of marriage, first that with regular consort, merely called wives and who may be as numerous as a man's resources allow".[92]

During the Mughal age Emperorkept a large number of concubines and for their selection, "*Mina Bazar*" was the best market. Manucci refers to it thus, "Many of them come out of the palace very rich and satisfied, while others continued to dwell

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84. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-III, p.958.
85. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-III, p.1063.
86. Zahiruddin Faruki, *Aurangzeb and his Time,* Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi, 1972, pp.545-46.
87. Zahiruddin Faruki, *Aurangzeb...*, pp.545-46. Also J.N Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb,* Calcutta: M.C. Sarkar & Sons, 1912, Vol-I, pp. 61-65.
88. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, p.211. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama...*, Vol-I, p.113.
89. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.288.
90. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.288.
91. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, p.367.
92. Father, S.J Monserrate, *The Commentary,* Eng tr. by J.S. Hoyland and Annoted by S.N.Benerjee, Calcutta: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1922, p.202.

there with the dignity of concubines".[93] Mughal Emperors and their nobles kept in their *harem* as many concubines as they desired, exclusive of their married wives. These concubines were not really married legally but they lived as wives. The children born of these concubines were treated equally like those born of the legal wives, and were known as *Kaniz, Sarkar* and *Paristar*.[94] Polygamous persons had a number of concubines; each concubine tried her best to win the favour of her master. For this they not only adorned themselves beautifully but also used the best available perfumes and sweet scented ointments of the time.[95] In the evening they used a composition of pearl, gold, opium, amber and other stimulants, as these produced a pleasant elevation of the spirit. In order to excite the lust of their masters they also encouraged them to use these intoxicants.[96] These concubines also served the master by driving flies away, rubbing his hands and feet and dancing and playing on musical instruments.[97] By means of attractive and fascinated presentation they sometimes gained the special favour of their masters who would make them their legal wives. The Mughal Emperors and the nobles made fine arrangements for keeping their concubines in their *harems*. Each concubine was assigned a separate quarter to live in.[98] These concubines were seldom visited by their master. Generally they were very faithful to their master and always tried to gain his favour and company.

They were often very jealous of each other and tried their level best to gain favours of their husband but they never expressed their feelings in words before him as they feared to annoy the master. The mother having a son was always loved more and was supported by a husband. Among the wives the senior wife commanded most respect, but the mother of the first son received more respect than others in the eyes of her lord.[99] Babur's beloved wife Bibi Mubarika could not bear any child due to the jealousy of other wives who administered drugs to take away her of motherhood and

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[93]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.188.

[94]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal Harem*, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988, p.29.
Also Shadab Bano, "Marriage and Concubinage in The Mughal Imperial Family", in *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress*, 59th Session, Calicut, 1999, p.356.

[95]. Thavenot and Careri, *Indian Travels...*, p.247.

[96]. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert,* Eng tr. by W.H. Moreland and P. Geyal, Delhi: Low Price Publication, 2011, p.65.

[97]. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, p.65.

[98]. De Laet, *Description of India*, p.99.

[99]. Zinat Kausar, *Muslim...*, p.256.

weaken her husband's (Babur's) affection.[100] Due to their hostile relations they lived in separate quarters and dined privately. Pelsaert rightly remarks, "Their food comes from one kitchen but each wife takes it in her own apartment for they hate each other secretly; though they seldom or never show it to be seen because of their desire to retain the favour of their husband, whom they fear, honour and worship as God rather than a man".[101]

Sometimes a neglected wife tried to draw attention of her husband by means of costly dress, jewellery, perfumes and sweet anointments.[102] In fact whenever a number of co-wives lived together they found no mental peace because of the constant strife among themselves. All co-wives, from a queen to an ordinary slave, burned with jealousy. Sometimes the senior wife under a polygamous husband was neglected, while the maid servants were rising to the status of legal wives as a result of illicit relationships with the master. These slaves warmly welcomed the master in a befitting dress for the occasion and would "seem to fly, rather than run, about their duties".[103] To gain the master's sympathy they rubbed his body with pounded sandal wood and rose water and with some other scented and cooling oil. Pelsaert has tried to show women's unsatisfied passion under a polygamous husband by writing thus, "these women wear indeed the most expensive clothes, eat the daintiest food and enjoy all worldly pleasure except one, and for that one they grieve saying they would willingly give every thing in exchange for a beggar's poverty.[104] A women's life was unstable and miserable in the presence of other co-wives, because in the household of the polygamist the God of quarrels reigned supreme.[105] The relation between the co-wives however, in some cases was very cordial and accommodating, although such instances were very rare.[106] A single husband could hardly be expected to satisfy his several wives who wore the most expensive clothes, ate the daintiest food and enjoyed all worldly pleasures.[107] Domestic unhappiness and immorality, in some cases at least, was natural consequence.

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[100]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p. 266.
[101]. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, P.65.
[102]. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, p.65.Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.352.
[103]. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, pp.64-65.
[104]. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, pp.65-66.
[105]. P.N Ojha, *North...*, p.133.
[106]. P.N Ojha, *North...*, p.133.
[107]. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, p.66.

The royal ladies of the Mughal *harem* had a lavish lifestyle. The important *harem* ladies owned a lot of wealth and money which they spent as they wished. As Manucci says, "these queens and princesses have pay or pensions according to their birth or the rank they hold. In addition, they often received from the king special presents in cash, under the pretext that it is to buy betel, or perfumes, or shoes".[108] The life of Muslim women under a polygamous husband was nothing but a pathetic tale, though they led a very luxurious life whose pomp, splendor and luxury could only be imagined by a common lady of the Mughal period. Their residences, well decorated and well furnished were the picture of magnificence. It is quite evident that the royal Mughal ladies had a lot of wealth in their hands. The more important place she occupied in the Emperor's life, the wealthier she was. As a result they earned lakhs and lakhs of rupees apart from the gold, silvers, gems, jewellery and other costly articles they owned.

Shaitanpura

The Mughal Emperors, particularly Akbar and Aurangzeb, took drastic step against prostitutes. For the prostitutes on outskirts of the city, Akbar got a particular area built called '*Shaitanpura'* in order to keep the city safe from adultery and vulgarity.[109] Keeper, deputy and a secretary were also appointed in the *shaitanpura* to keep eyes on them. If any one wishes to take any lady with them from *shaitanpura*, he must make entry in the register first. But he did not permit any man to take dancing girls to his house at night, without conforming to these conditions, in order that he might keep the matter under proper control.[110] Ladies of *shaitanpura* were not allowed to go (escape) without prior information to them (the *Darogas, Munsi,* etc). If they escape without any information and the matter comes to the knowledge of Emperor, he itself calls upon and rebukes them, and after learning their names, several important *Amirs* were surely reprimanded and punished, and also imprisoned if necessary.[111]Inspite of all these steps taken against brothel houses Akbar could not eradicate this evil.[112]

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[108]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.341.

[109]. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, pp.311-12. Also Diya Narayan Nigam, *Tarikh-i-Hind...*, p.42.

[110]. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, pp.311-12. Shadab Bano, "Women Performers and Prostitutes in Medieval India", in *Indian History Congress 70th Session*, Delhi University, 2010, p.350.

[111]. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, p.312. Also Diya Narayan Nigam, *Tarikh-i-Hind...*, p. 42.

[112]. P.N Ojha, *North Indian Social Life during Mughal Period,* Delhi: Oriental Publishers and

Widow

The death of husband was certainly the greatest tragedy and the saddest calamity, in the life of a Hindu woman. In Hindu religion a widow had two alternatives- to live a life of celibacy for the rest of the life or set herself on fire on the funeral pyre of the dead husband but in lower castes remarriage was allowed. Widow Remarriage was permitted amongst the Muslims but the widows were conferred upon the status of a second-rate wife. Careri notes that, "some lower castes like milkmen, gardeners, washermen, fishermen, etc, approve of this practice".[113] Altekar rightly observed, "No divorce was allowed, even if the husband was a moral wreck or grievously ill-treated his wife".[114] Even when the husband died, the woman had no choice even if she desired to remarry. Muslim widows enjoyed a respectable position in society throughout Mughal period. Unlike Hindu, a Muslim widow was allowed to attend and enjoy the festivities of betrothal, *nikah* and birth ceremonies. Mughal rulers never forbade their ladies to remarry; they encouraged widow remarriage by marrying widows themselves in practical. Akbar made a regulation which conferred liberty upon Hindu widows to remarry without any question though it was against custom[115]. As a result during the Mughal rule, widow remarriage was widely practiced by the rich and the poor alike. Manucci also refers to this custom thus, "since the law thus directed that the wives of a dead elder brother belonged to the living younger brother".[116] Under this custom Aurangzeb wished to marry Rana-i-Dil, the widow of Dara but this marriage did not materialize. It is important to mention that some Muslim widows live in solitude, embracing the memoirs of their late husbands. Such widows were highly honoured not only in the family but in society too. When Aurangzeb knew that Rana-i-Dil was not interested in remarriage, her endowed with more respect and throughout her life he treated her with courtesy she deserved. [117]

Distributers, 1975, P.154.

[113]. Thavenot and Careri, *Indian Travels...*, pp. 256-57. Also Meera Nanda, *Socio-economic History of Mughal*, Delhi: Discovery publishing house, 1987, p.90

[114]. A.S Altekar, *The position...*, p.102. Also Chopra.P.N, *Some...*, p.118.

[115]. Nigam Dya Narayan, *Tarikh-i-Hind...*, p. 41.

[116]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p. 361.

[117]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.361.

Sati

Sati is an ancient institution and custom of India.[118] *Sati* was sure means of reunion of wife with her dead husband. The greatest tragedy in the life of a Hindu woman was the death of her husband. A widow had to burn herself alive with the dead body of her husband or had to lead a life of suffering and misery and was treated with contempt by the other member of the family. If they hesitate to jump into fire willingly they were driven forcibly into this furnace and if they tried to leap out, they were held down by poles and hooks.[119]

Society looked down upon the widows who did not perform *sati.* They were not allowed to grow their hair long or to put on ornaments and wear good dresses. Widowhood was considered a punishment of the sins of previous lives. Almost all the foreign travellers who visited India during the Mughal period mention that women used to burn themselves with the dead body of their husband. Still there were many ladies who refused to perform it.[120] Travernier describe, "the custom among the gentiles of burning bodies after death is very ancient, they generally burn them on the back of rivers, where they wash the bodies of the deceased to complete the clearing of those sins from which they have not been purified during life, a living woman to be burnt in the fire together with the body of her deceased husband".[121] Monserrate also refers that, the wives of Brahmans, a famous class of nobly born Hindu, are accustomed, in accordance with an ancient tradition of their religion to burn themselves on the same pyres as their dead husband.[122]

In medieval India, the custom of *sati* gained an upper hand. Usually she was expected to follow her dead husband to the other world by immolating herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. In such a case she was greatly honoured and praised as the idol of Indian womanhood. If she did not commit sati or the act of self immolation, she was, as noted above, condemned to a life of humiliation. Akbar issued an order that if a Hindu woman wished to be burnt with her husband no one

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[118]. William Hawking, *Early Travels...*, p. 119.
[119]. Fathe Monserrate, *The Commentary...*, p.13.
[120]. Francois Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, p.80.
[121]. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India,* Eng tr. by V.Ball, London: Macmillan & Co, 1889, Vol-II, pp.161-62.
[122]. Father Monserrate, *The Commentary...*, p.61.

should stop her; but she should not be forced against her will.[123] Jahangir and Aurangzeb also disallowed a woman to be burnt.[124] We learn from Manucci that the Emperor (Aurangzeb), on his return from Kashmir (December 1663 A.D) issued an order that in all lands Mughals control never again should the officials allow a woman to be burnt. This endures to this day.[125] This humanitarian rule is also mentioned in the official manuals of his reign.

Jauhar

The custom of *jauhar* was more or less confined to the gallant Rajputs.[126] When a Rajput chief and his soldiers became sure of their defeat in a military encounter, they either killed their women and children or locked them inside a fortress or an underground enclosure and set that on fire.[127] This custom was known as '*jauhar*'. Rajput did not know of surrender in battle-field, be victory or death; and this custom of *jauhar* was mainly intended to safeguard the honour of the womenfolk at the cost of their lives. Abul Fazl refers to this fatal custom performed by the Rajput of Chittor, on its fall, thus, "for it is an Indian custom that when such a calamity has occurred a *piti* is made of sandalwood, alone etc, as large as possible and to add this, dry firewood and oil. Then they leave hardhearted confidents in charge of their women. As soon as it is certain that there has been a defeat and that the men have been killed, these stubborn ones reduce the innocent women to ashes".[128] *Jauhar,* in fact, refers to the high standard of womanly honour maintained among the brave Rajputs.

Meena or Fancy Bazaars

Mughal Emperorexhibited great interest in provoking opportunities to their ladies for entertainment and pleasure. One of the most important amusements to the royal ladies was known as *Khushruz,*[129] or the joyful day which was a kind of fair mainly held in the *Mahal* or royal palace. The fair was mainly conducted by the ladies

[123]. Badaoni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, p.388.
[124]. Thevenot and Careri, *Indian Travels...*, p.120.
[125]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.97.
[126]. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* William Crooke (ed.), London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1920, Vol-II, pp.744-746.
[127]. P.N Ojha, *North...*, p.151
[128]. Abul Fazl, *Akbar...*, Vol-II, p.472. Also *Ain...*, Vol-III, p.358.
[129]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.287.

of the noble class such as the wives of *omrahs* and *mansabdars.*[130] Humayun was the first among the Mughal Emperors to introduce what later came to be known as *Meena Bazaar* and was continued by his successors also. This custom is said to have been borrowed by the Mughals from Turkistan and Transoxiana.[131] The first of this kind was held on boats near the king's palace after the customary mystic feast.[132] Akbar arranged this fair-cum-bazar in quit a new fashion and named it anew as *'khushroz'* (joyful day fair) or a gala day because such days were a source of enjoyments for those concerned. Shahjahan's popular amusement was "a species of fair which was held for eight successive days in the gallery of the *harem*".[133] The pomp and grandeur of these 'fancy fairs' appeared to have been greatly increased under Shahjahan, the 'Magnificent'.[134] No fixed interval seems to have been observed for holding such a bazaar. According to Abul Fazl it was held once a month.[135] According to Badaoni, Akbar also ordered that "for a stated time (it) is given up for the enjoyment of the Begums and the ladies of the *harem*"[136] it was normally managed inside the *harem,* "*within the Mahal*".[137]

But probably Akbar had reasons to raise it to the status of a tradition and make it a source of great enjoyment. It was necessary to hold a market within the boundaries of the *Mahal.* Shahjahan used to arrange a bazaar on the occasion of every festival.[138] It invariably followed the *Nauroz* celebrations.[139] Only the Emperor, royal princes and privileged nobles could enter the bazaar as buyers.

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[130]. Bernier, *Waqai Sair Va Siyasat,* Urdu Translation by Sayyad Muhammad Husain, Amritsar: Matba Riyaz Hind, 1886, Vol-II, p.294.

[131]. Syed Ameer Ali, "Islamic Culture under the Mughals", in *Islamic Culture The Hyderabad Quarterly Review,* Hyderabad: 1927, Vol-I, p.509.

[132]. P. N Chopra, *Some...*, p.88.

[133]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.195.

[134]. Francois Bernier, *Travels in The Mughal Empire (1656-1668),* Translated and Annoted Archibald Constable, Second edition Revised by Vicent A.Smith, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributers, 1990, pp.272-74. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.195.

[135]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.277.

[136]. Badauni, *Muntakhab...*, Vol-II, p.350.

[137]. Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, (1608-1667),* Sir Richard Carnac Temple (ed.), London: Cambridge Hakluyt Society, 1907-37, Vol-II, p.238.
Also Thevenot and Careri, *Indian Travels...*, pp.70-71.

[138]. Bernier, *Travels...*, p.273.

[139]. Bernier, *Travels...*, p.272.

The Mina Bazaar was an exclusively women's affair and not open to the general public.[140] These *Khushroz* or *Meena-Bazaars* were held from the door of Jodh Bai's palace to the courtyard and garden of Mariyam's *Mahal* in Fatehpur Sikri, and in the Agra Fort in the courtyard near to the Mina Masjid. The stalls in the specially constructed bazaar were distributed among nobles to be arranged by their wives or daughters who acted as traders, to sell a variety of commodities ranging from handicrafts, jewellery, cloth, brocades, fruits, flowers, etc.[141] These ladies usually were "the handsomest and most engaging wives of the *Umra*".[142] Rajput ladies also attended the show.[143] The shops were usually of goldsmiths, grocers, cloth merchants, etc.[144] The articles exhibited were costly ornaments, silk and other fabrics.[145] The king with princesses and the ladies of the royal seraglio would pay visits to the bazaar, and make his bargain, frequently disputing to the value of a dam.

It is important to mention in this connection that Jahangir, during his reign hold the fancy bazaar at night and made arrangements for lighting lamps in front of the shops to look well.[146] No *parda* (veil) was observed in *Khushroz* festival, women need not be veiled before the Emperor as their bridegroom. Besides collecting beauties, the Mughal Emperors frequently enjoyed the performances of dancing girls. These, both singers and dancers, were known by the common name *kanchanis*. K.S Lal the author of *Mughal Harem* says, "there were licentious and lascivious motives for Akbar behind organizing *Noroz*, *Khushroz* and *Mina-Bazaar* festivals."[147] After the fancy bazaar of women, bazaar for men were held (started during the reign of Akbar), in which merchants from different parts sold their commodities.[148] The objective of the fair was fun, not shopping, though the occasion also served, according to Badauni, to arrange "important affairs of the *harem* people, marriage contracts, and

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[140]. Syed Ameer Ali, *Islamic Culture* ..., p.509.

[141]. Peter Mundy, *The Travels*..., Vol-II, p.238. Also James Tod, *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* William Crooke (ed.), London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1920, Vol-I, pp.401-402.

[142]. Bernier, *Travels*..., p.273.

[143]. Peter Mundy, *The Travels*..., Vol-II, p.238.

[144]. Bernier, *Travels*..., pp.272-73.

[145]. Peter Mundy, *The Travels*..., Vol-II, p.238.

[146]. Jahangir, *Tuzuk*..., Vol-II, p.31. Also Muhammad Hadi, "Tatimma-i-Waqiat-i-Jahangiri", in *History of India as Told by its own Historian,* Elliot and Dowson, London: Trubner & Co, 1875, Vol-VI, p.361.

[147]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal*..., p.166.

[148]. Abul Fazl, *Ain*..., Vol-I, p.287.

betrothals of boys and girls". The fair last a week. According to Manucci "These eight days were observed in the palace with festivity, dancing, music, acting and other amusements. The fortress remained shut, with no man inside but the king".[149] According to Abul Fazl, the main intention of Akbar behind holding such fairs was "to select any article which he wishes to buy, or to fix the price of things, and thus add to his knowledge. The secret of the empire, the character of the people, the good and bad qualities of each office and worship, will then appear".[150] The system of Mina Bazaar came to an end after Shahjahan and was never heard of it in the reign of Aurangzeb.

Economic Life

The Mughal Empire witnessed developments in all spheres of economy which included agriculture, internal and external trade, commerce and industries, banking and currency. The trade and commerce of the Mughal period was generally conducted by business community of this country. There were, however a number of instances of royal family members and nobles of the state who took a strong interest in commerce, and who even eagerly oversaw their own commercial ventures.[151] Though in general trade and commerce was never a very favourite occupation of the ladies, much less of the ladies of the royalty; yet during the Mughal period some ladies seem to have been attracted towards it, just because a very prosperous foreign trade was flourishing in the country. Though too many royal ladies of the Mughal *harem* did not actively participated in the economic field, yet there were distinguished ladies of that time like Jahangir's mother Maryam-uz-Zamani, Nur Jahan Begum and Shahjahan's daughter princess Jahan Ara, who are known to have taken an active participation in the trade and commerce of that time.

Mughal noble women of the early colonial period in India were singularly wealthy, unlike other Indian women at this time.[152] A lavish life style at court, with its obligatory practice of gift giving, provided numerous ways for Mughal women to amass their wealth. Firstly, they were given regular monthly allowances and maintenance grants which could be supplemented whenever their high personal

[149]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.345-46. Also Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal World: Life in India's Last Golden Age,* New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2007, p.137.

[150]. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.287. Also Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.103.

[151]. Rekha Misra, *Women in Mughal India (1526-1748),* Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967, p.68.

[152]. A.S Altekhar, *The position...*, pp.214-17.

expenditures warranted.[153] Usually half of this allowance came from the royal treasury and the other half was given in the form of grant (*jagir*) of a district of land (*Pargana*) which often yielded more than the stipulated amount of the allowance.[154] These *parganas* granted to women could be fairly large.[155] The practice of granting *parganas* to women appears to have begun with Babur,[156] was continued under Humayun, abated somewhat during the time of Akbar, and became a considerable practice under Jahangir.[157] Since owing these *jagirs* meant a lot of income for them. It can be said without any doubt that they must have tried their best to improve the economic condition of these *jagirs*.

Second, on special occasion such as birthdays, military victories and hunting expenditures, Mughal women received presents from the Emperor.[158] Gifts including cash (often hundreds of thousands of rupees),[159] jewels,[160] costly dresses, perfumes, elephants, and armed troops of cavalry,[161] but could be confiscated, no matter who they were from, whenever the beneficiary annoyed the Emperor. Often gifts arrived from European travellers and merchants at the court, who came either to exchange or to establish trading agreements with the Indians. European gifts were highly desired by Mughal women the European gifts such as horse-drawn carriages, musical instruments, and European paintings were given by the foreign traders to buy influence in the chambers where, they rightly thought the real power lay.[162] The royal ladies also received special gifts in cash and kind on special occasions. Gulbadan Begum informs us that after Babur's victory against Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat, he told Khwaja Kilan Beg to take valuable presents and curiosities Hind to his "elder relations, sisters and each person of the *harem*"[163] his further orders were. After the

153. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.46.
154. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, pp.342, 380. Also Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.111.
155. Rekha Misra, *Women...*, p. 61.
156. Ellison Banks Findly, *NurJahan Empress of Mughal India*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.111.
157. Rekha Misra, *Women...*, pp.60-62.
158. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, pp.374-75. Also Chandra Pant, *Nur Jahan and her Family*, Allahabad: Dan Dewal Publishing House, 1978, p.112.
159. Jahangi, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p. 401.
160. Jahangi, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-I, p.375, Vol-II, p.74.
161. William Hawkins, *Early Travels...*, p.98.
162. William Hawkins, *Early Travels...*, p.67n. Also Chandra Pant, *Nur ...*, pp.150-51.
163. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, pp. 94-95.

accession, Humayun soon paid a visit to his mother, sister and other ladies of his seraglio and he gave those *jagirs* to them and confirmed their *mansabs*.[164]

Third, women could come into the wealth of a family member. Although the recipient was often a relative, this practice in no way encouraged the accumulation of large fortunes. The best known example of a woman as recipient was Jahangir's gift in 1622 to his favorite queen Nur Jahan of her father's enormous estate. Fourth Mughal women received revenue from the customs dues exacted on travellers and merchants who agreed through their lands.[165] This came to no small amount as inland and overseas commerce at the time was rapidly expanding. Finally, women filled their purses from returns on investments, placed primarily in the burgeoning shipping trade in the Red Sea and in the Sea laves to Europe.[166] Mughal women were also actively involved in domestic trade, the needs and requirements of the Mughal *harem* gave an impetus to many industries, including both the imperial *Karkhanas* and also those which flourished in the other parts of the country. They started with textiles that the *harem* ladies dress in the costliest clothes made from the finest material whether of cotton, silk or wool. The muslins used for their clothes were of three types *Ab-e-Rawan* (running water), *Baft Hawa* (woven air) and *Shabnam* (evening dew).[167] Mughal ladies love of silk especially in making their dresses resulted in a lot of silk being imported from foreign countries like China and Persia, and also brought from many parts of the country like Banaras, Bengal and Orissa. Some of the other well-known fabrics used by the Mughal ladies were satin, *kimkhab, kattan, tasser, tafta, ambari, atlas,* etc. Both plain and brocaded velvet called *Makhmal* was brought from Europe, Sashan, Yazd, Mashad, Heratand some new places.[168] Apart from fine fabrics and beautiful dresses, the Mughal ladies were also interested in Jewellery, items of decoration needed in their palaces, furniture items, looking glasses, laces, carpets, shoes and slippers, bed sheets, pillow-covers, shawls and many other things. Many of these were manufactured in the imperial *karkhanas* by skilled artisans, but some of them were brought from foreign countries.

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[164]. Gulbadan, *Humayun...*, p.24.
[165]. Francisco Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, p.4.
[166]. Rekha Misra, *Women...*, pp.68-70.
[167]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.122.
[168]. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.123.

Jahangir gave many of his women grants of land as part of their regular allowances and also at time of their special service to the empire. Nur Jahan for example, received the *pargana* of Toda with revenue of Rs.200, 000.[169] *Beni Prasad* commented, "If she (*Nur Jahan*) could have been admitted to the order of *mansabdar*, her *jagirs* would have entitled her to the rank of 30,000".[170] The largest number of *jagirs* was given by Shahjahan to his eldest daughter Princess Jahan Ara. Some of her *jagirs* were that of Achchol[171](later called Begamabad as Qazwini states and Sahababad as Lahori states). On Shah Jahan's accession ten lakh rupees were fixed as the annual allowances of Mumtaz Mahal, Jahan Ara Begum's annual allowance was fixed at six lakh rupees.[172] Manucci estimated Jahan Ara Begum's income to thirty lakh rupees annually apart from the precious stones jewels owned by her.[173] Totally it amounted to nearly three million rupees.[174] Shah Jahan continued to give Nur Jahan Begum an annual maintenance allowance of two lakh rupees when he came to the throne.[175] It was in very exceptional cases that official documents such as *Hukums, Sanads, Nishan* and *Parwanas* were issued by a queen or a princess. This exceptional privilege was allowed only to those who held the highest rank in the imperial *harem* such as Hamida Banu Begum, Maryam-uz-Zamani, Nur Jahan and Jahan Ara.[176]

Akbar's wife and Jahangir's mother Maryam-uz-Zamani, was greatly interested in trade and commerce of her time and was the first royal Mughal lady who participated directly in it. The most remarkable of the woman traders, was Maryam-uz-Zamani, a woman of substantial personal wealth. She was one of only four members of the court (another was the Emperor) and the only woman to have the rank of 12,000 cavalry *(suwar)*,[177] and was known to receive a jewel from every nobleman "according to his estate" each year on the occasions of the New Year's festival.[178]

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169. Findly, *NurJahan...*, p.111.
170. Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir,* Allahabad: Indian Press, 1962, p.169.
Mutamid Khan, "Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri", in *The History of India As Told by Its Own Historians*, Elliot and John Dowson, London: Trubner & Co, 1875, Vol-VI, pp.398-99.
171. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, Part-II, p.51. Vol-II, Part-I, p. 209.
172. Inayat Khan *Shahjahan Nama,* Eng tr. by A.R.Fuller, W.E. Begley and Z.A.Desai (eds), First Regnal Year, Delhi: Oxford University Press New York, 1990, pp. 2-3.
173. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.216.
174. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p. 216.
175. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, Part-I, pp.96-97.
176. Rekha Misra, *Women...*, pp.67.
177. William Hawkins, *Early Travels...*, p.98.
178. William Hawkins, *Early Travels...*, p.118.

Like only a few other women at court, Maryam-uz-Zamani was granted the right to issue official documents (*farmans*),[179] usually the exclusive privilege of the Emperor, and like Nur Jahan, she used her wealth and influence to build gardens, wells, and mosques around the countryside.[180] The business affairs of the Begums were managed by officers called *Nazirs,* who were, says Manucci, "in charge of the 'property, lands and income [of the begums]. All the officials, servants, and slaves were bound to account to the *Nazir* for all they did and for whatever they had in their hands".[181] The right of issuing imperial *farmans* was the exclusive privilege of the Emperor. These women proved to be great business women who used to the profit from her shipping in double manner. Firstly these want to expand her profit from the overseas trade and secondly she used her ship for religious purpose also, take people and pilgrims, who want to go to hajj.

Mariyam-uz-Zamani had her own ships and carried on brisk trade from the Surat Ports on the Red Sea. One of her famous Ships was *Rahimi* of Surat.[182] Sir Thomas Roe also mentioned Mariyam-uz-Zamani's Ships in his account.[183] No other noblewoman on record seemed to have been as adventurous a trader as the queen,[184] however and no trader's Ship seemed to have fallen into as much troubles as hers. In February of 1609, for example, Maryam-uz-Zamani's Ship was being readied to carry goods to Mocha, an Arabian port, South of Mecca at the entrance of the Red Sea. There was trouble again in late 1610/early 1611 when Maryam-uz-Zamani's Ship was being loaded for another trip to Mocha.[185] This Ship had valuable cargo and passengers and also had a Portuguese pass guaranteeing her against molestation;[186]

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179. Rekha Misra, *Women...*, pp.67.

180. Jahangir, *Tuzuk...*, Vol-II, p.64.

181. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-II, p.351. Also Abraham Eraly, *The Mughal...*, p.133.

182. John Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain (1608-1617),* William Foster (ed.), (Second Series No.xvi), Cambridge Hakluyt Society, 1905, pp. 155-56. Also Sarkar Jagdish Narayan, *Studies in Economic Life in Mughal India* Delhi: Oriental Publisher & Distributors, 1975, pp.274-75.

183. Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of sir Thomas Roe to The Court of the Great Mogul (1915-1619),* Foster William (ed.), (Second Series-No.1), London: Hakluyt Society, 1958, Vol-I, p.74.Vol-II, pp.387-88.

184. Foster William (ed.), *Letters Received by the East India Company From its servants in the East (1613-1615)*, London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1897, Vol-II, p.213.
Also *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, Eng tr. by C.H. Payne, The Broadway Travelers, Sir E. Denison Ross and Eileen Power (eds), London: George Routledge & Sons, 1930, pp.140-41.

185. William Finch, *Early Travels...*, p.129.

186. Withington Nicholas, *Early Travels...*, p.191.

they demanded 30,000 rails for its release.[187] The Mughals got very angry by this high-handed behavior of the Portuguese when the Portuguese showed no signs of restoring the ship, Mukarrab Khan was sent to Surat 'with order to stop all traffic' and to lay siege to the Portuguese town of Daman by way of reprisals.[188] Some foreign travellers described of the tonnage of a few (named) Indian ships mostly based on the tradition experience of such calculations. The largest tonnage mentioned is that of *Rahimi*, which was some where between 1,000 and 1,500 tons.[189] Mariyam-uz-Zamani was in no way immune to the dangers of the business.[190]

One of Jahangir's wives Jagat Gosain did not contribute directly towards the economic field, but she is said to have founded a village called *Sohagpura*. This village was a famous manufacturing centre for fine bangles of glass quite popular among and considered auspicious by spinsters and married ladies.[191]

Nur Jahan Begum also took a very active part in trade and commerce of her time. She received *jagirs* the grants of land, gifts of gold and jewels, from Jahangir and unaccounted resources. She also got gifts and presents from Indian Rajas and foreign merchants. The *jagirs* she held extended all over the country, and would have conferred on her the title of a commander of 30,000.[192] Her large *jagir* of *Ramsar* was situated about 30 kilometers South-east of Ajmer.[193] In 1617, on the happy event of Shahjahan's victory in the Deccan, Nur Jahan was given the *pargana* of Toda as *jagir*. It lay 80 kilometers South-east of Ajmer on the medieval trade route from Surat to Agra and brought her an annual income of two lakhs of rupees.[194]

Unlike her Mother-in-Law Jodha Bai, Nur Jahan Begum's commercial activities were not confined to sea-trade alone. She is famed to have built market places and *Sarais*, had Ships of her own that carried on brisk sea-trade and even coins were minted in her name. No other Muslim women enjoyed such a privilege of having

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187. *Letters Received by the East India Company From its servants in the East*, (1602-1613), Introduction by Frederick Charles Danvers, London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1896, Vol-I, p.186.
188. *Letters Received...*, (1602-1613), Vol -I, p.192.
189. A.J Qaisar, *Shipbuilding in the Mughal Empire During the Seventeenth Century*, Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh, p.165.
190. *Letters Received...*, (1602-1613), Vol -I, pp.317-18.
191. Soma Mukherjee, *Royal...*, p.239.
192. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.574.
193. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.574.
194. Abul Fazl, *Ain...*, Vol-I, p.380.

coins minted in their name. Nur Jahan's coins were made of gold and bore the twelve signs of the Zodiac, one sign on each coin.[195] It is not clearly known how much of an economic transaction was carried on by these coins. Manucci calls them "current money"[196] where as Pelsaert said that they were not so.[197]

Nur Jahan also actively participated in overseas trade and commerce. Foreign trade at this time was flourishing and lucrative. Indian Ships were carrying textiles, spices, ginger, pepper, dyes, opium and various other drugs from India to west Asian countries like Arabia, Persia, North Africa and brought back wines, perfumes, brocade, china goods, gold, silver, ivory, amber, pearls, horses, etc.[198] Many of her commercial enterprises turned enormous profits, especially those connecting indigo and embroidered cloth.[199] A very intelligent and practical business woman, Nur Jahan was even willing to co-operate with the Portuguese if she thought the partnership could offer commercial security and profits. Several of her business ventures were of this kind; and her Ships regularly paid dues to the Portuguese.[200] Nur Jahan's relations with the English were well, but while protecting English goods and their interest,[201] her own self-interest were supreme with her. She had to negotiation with the fact that the Emperor, his mother and many other members of the royal family were all trading on their own account, and Nur Jahan could not control any item of trade nor could she ignore the Portuguese completely. She traded with the Portuguese merchants of Daman and Diu despite their practices, because they could acquire rare objects from more Easterly countries,[202] she encouraged the indigo and embroidered cloth trade in particular,[203] with whomever it might be and she oversaw the actual transport of goods either in her own fleet of ships,[204] or in those she hired from some other

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[195]. Pelsaert Francois, *Jahangir's...*, p.29.
[196]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.162.
[197]. Pelsaert, *Jahangir's...*, p.29.
[198]. D. Pant, *Commercial Policy of the Mughals*, Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delhi, 1978, pp.106-107.
[199]. *Letter Received...*, (1602-1613), Vol-I, p. 305.
[200]. William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1618-21)*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906, Vol-I, p. x.
[201]. Roe Thomas, *The Embassy...*, Vol-II, pp.436-444.
[202]. William Foster, *The English...*, Vol-I, p.81.
[203]. D. Pant, *Commercial...*, p.165.
[204]. William Foster, *The English...*, Vol-I, p.81.
William Foster, *The English Factories in India (1622-23)*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908, Vol-II, p.204.

owner.[205] Actually as time went by, Nur Jahan came to trust the British more than other foreigners, and increasingly she sent her goods in British EIC Ships in preference to those of the Portuguese or Indians. British Queen Elizabeth I's ambassador, Thomas Roe, dealt with her frequently and she played a crucial intermediary role in his negotiations with the imperial court.[206]

The English profited by her favours. She managed *farmans* for them conferring concessions.[207] In these transactions Nur Jahan's brother Asaf Khan was the chief agent and mediator. Gifts and presents were exchanged between the British and the Mughal royal family. William Hawkins, who came to India in 1608, writes that "knowing the custom of these moors that without gifts and bribes nothing could go forward, I sent my broker to seek out for jewels fitting for royalty and presented jewels to Shakr-un-Nisa Begum, sister of Jahangir and his paramour (Nur Jahan)".[208]

In the reign of Shahjahan, his eldest daughter Jahan Ara Begum was the only royal Mughal lady who took an active interest and participated in the prosperous trade and commerce of that time. Jahan Ara Begum possessed enormous wealth. On his accession Shahjahan had bestowed upon her one hundred thousand rupees and fixed her an allowance at six hundred thousand rupees.[209] She owned many *jagirs*, the revenues of which came to her, the gifts that she received from other sources. Some of her *jagirs* were Panipat, Achchol[210], Bachchol[211], and Dohraha.[212]

Jahan Ara extracted annual revenue of 30 million dams, equal to Rs. 750,000, from the Surat region, collectively with 10 million dams, equal to Rs. 250,000, from port dues.[213]Dohara in Fatehpur was close by her to cover the expenses of her garden.[214] And in this sphere too Jahan Ara liked to be hands-on,[215] the *Pargana* of

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[205]. William Foster, *The English...*, Vol-II, p.204.
[206]. Thomas Roe, *The Embassy...*, Vol-II, pp.401-404.
[207]. Thomas Roe and Fryer John, *Travels in India in the Seventeen Century*, London: Trubner & Co, 1873, Reprint New Delhi: Asian Educational Service, 1993, p.144.
[208]. William Hawkins, *Early Travels...*, p. 94.
[209]. Bnarsi Prasad Saksena, *History of Shahjahan of Delhi*, Allahabad: Indian Press, 1932, pp.63-64.
[210]. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, Pt-II, p.51.
[211]. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, Pt-I, p.209.
[212]. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-I, Pt-II, p.51.
[213]. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.216.
[214]. *Ruka'at-i-Alamgiri or Letters of Aurangzeb*, Eng tr. by Jamshid H. Bilimoria, Letter No. Lxxvi, London: Luzac & Co, 1908, p.77.
[215]. William Foster, *The English Factories in India* (1651-1654), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915, Vol IX, pp. xi.xii, (Introduction).

Panipat yielded an annual revenue of one crore dams.[216] In one *Nishan,* she acknowledges the receiving of musk pods, the creation of her assigned territories; and in another she complains about the quality of ice-boxes from Garhwal.[217] In a third she instructs her officials to be hard-working in the collection of snow from the mountains, and also in making payments due to the laborers.[218] It was regular in the *harem* to reciprocate such gestures and she also gave presents to her father and brothers. Once on the occasion of the weighing ceremony of Shahjahan, she gave him a pearl of great value and distributed gold and silver in *nisar.*[219] On the accession of Aurangzeb, she presented precious jewels to the new Emperor and again sent presents to him on the occasion of his weighing ceremony.[220] On another occasion when Shahjahan recovered from illness the princess along with some other ladies distributed fifty thousand rupees to the poor. Manucci informs us that Jahan Ara had an annual income of about Rs.3 million, in accumulation to the revenues she received from the port of Surat.[221]

Princess Jahan Ara like Nurjahan Begum, built caravansaries and market places, engaged in sea-trade and on the whole took an active interest in trade and commerce. She built the famous caravanserais known as the caravanserai of *Begum Saheb* or the *Begum Sarai.* It was built in Delhi and foreigners like Manucci, Bernier, Tavernier and Thevenot speak of it in their accounts. In it provision was made for adequate safety of the travellers and merchants, this caravanserai was said to have been meant for the rich Persian, Uzbek and other foreign merchants.[222] No doubt this *sarai* with its special facilities encouraged merchants to carry on trade and commerce between different places through Delhi. The Begum *Sarai* was destroyed after the sepoy Mutiny.[223] She also built the famous caravanserai at Kirki.[224] In Srinagar, Kashmir, she built a house for the poor at a cost of twenty thousand rupees.[225] She

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216. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p. 216.
217. S.A.I Tirmizi, *Edicts from the Mughal Harem,* Delhi: Idarah-I Adbiyat-I, 2009, pp.104, 108.
218. S.A.I Tirmizi, *Edicts from...*, p. 108.
219. Lahori, *Badshah...*, Vol-II, Pt-I, p.315.
220. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-II, Part-I, pp. 45-46.
221. Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.216.
222. Bernier, *Travels...*, p. 280. Also Manucci, *Storia...*, Vol-I, p.221.
223. Bernier, *Travels...*, p.281 (n).
224. Tavernier, *Travels...*, Vol-I, p.49.
225. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Persian, Vol-I, p. 706.

was able to trade voluminously on her own account,[226] running a large number of ships herself and entering into enormously successful trading relations with the Dutch and the English.[227] Their co-operation helped her to carry on extensive trade and make huge profits.[228] Jahan Ara interested in commercial activities had played a vital role in trading operation and was the owner of several ships named as *Sahibi* and Ganjuwar. She carried on trading ventures through her ships '*Sahebi*' named after Begum Saheb, the popular title of Jahan Ara Begum.[229]

The ship *Sahebi* was used by the princess for profits as well as to assist Haj Pilgrims.[230] In 1643, one of her ships carried Pilgrims and goods worth Rs.5, 000-Rs.10, 000, to be sold at Jedda. The ships were also to carry 50 *gonis* (or 1674 kg) of rice for free distribution at Macca on behalf of the princess.[231] No fare was charged from the Pilgrims. But they were warned against carrying the goods of other merchants in their names.[232] The ships was ordered not to set sail without taking Merchants and their cargo, though the *naul* (freight) collected from them was to be given away in alms. [233] The cargo of the princess carried on this vessel was worth 10 to 15 thousands of rupees. The treasurer of the ship was in charge of keeping in his custody the amount received from freight and also the money got from the sale of the princess's cargo. The caption of the ship was under instructions to bring as many horses as he was able to procure at Jedda. The *Sahebi* is known to have operated till 1663 A.D, the year in which we last hear of her. In July 1663 the English at *Mokha* were advised to board her for *Surat* after closing down their trade.[234] Another ship *Gunjawar,* which originally belonged to Shahjahan was given to princess Jahan Ara in December 1629 A.D, along with the instruments, valuable drugs and material.[235] It

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[226]. D.Pant, *Commercial Policy...*, p.211.

[227]. William Foster, *The English Factories in India,* (1642-45), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913, Vol-VII, p.148.

[228]. William Foster, *The English...*, Vol-VII, p.148.
William Foster, *The English Factories in India,* (1646-1650), Oxford: Clarendon Press,1914, Vol-VIII, pp. 219-20.

[229]. Shreen Moosvi, *People Taxation and Trade in Mughal India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.258.

[230]. Shreen Moosvi, "Mughal Shipping at Surat in the First Half of Seventeen Century", in *Proceeding Indian History Congress,* 51st session, Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1990, p.312.

[231]. Shreen Moosvi, *People...*, p.265. Also Shreen Moosvi, *Mughal...*, p.312.

[232]. Shreen Moosvi, *Mughal...*, p.312.

[233]. Shreen Moosvi, *People...*, pp. 264-65

[234]. Shreen Moosvi, *Mughal...*, p. 313.

[235]. Shadab Bano, "Jahan Ara's Administration of her Jagirs", in *Proceeding Indian History Congress,*

also operated from Surat.[236] She had inherited half of her mother's fortune, but alsc traded with the Dutch who had been in competition with the Portuguese and the British since Jahangir's time.[237]

She built a country house for herself in the village of Achhbal with gardens and fountains.[238] Her palaces in Delhi and Lahore were famous market places. These market places became the most important commercial centers of those cities where merchants even from foreign lands came with their goods. Outside the Delhi fort, or the northern side of *Chandni Chowk*, she laid out a garden called *Begam Ka Bagh*. I is now Gandhi Maidan opposite Delhi junction Railway station.[239] During the time o the Mughals, *Chandni Chowk* was a famous and flourishing trade centre where traders from all parts of Hindustan and abroad came. Each shop specialized in a particula commodity. There were jewellery shops selling exquisite ornaments and rare gems and pearls. Some shops sold fine wine some sold ornamented hookahs and decoratior materials. Many of the articles sold here were rare and very costly. The rich peopl and the nobles often visited the *Chandni Chowk* for shopping.[240] Mughal ladies invested significant wealth in trade and commerce and were rewarded with rich profits. Also, their building market places and *Sarais* and having their own ship carrying on external trade, certainly, helped in the extent process of trade and commerce.

66th Session, Santiniketan: 2006, pp.431-32.

236. Shreen Moosvi, *Mughal...*, p. 311.

237. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire...*, p.153

238. K.S Lal, *The Mughal...*, p.96.

239. K.S Lal., *The Mughal...*, p.96.

240. Maheswar Dayal, *Rediscovering Delhi: the Story of Shahjahanabad,* New Delhi: S. Chand, 1975, pp. 15-16.

Chapter: 5

Political Uncertainties of the 18th Century: Its Impact on the Mughal Harem

The eighteenth century is traced back as a period of confusion in the history of India. In the beginning of the 18th century Mughal Empire was wide but by the end of the century it had shrunk to a few kilometers around Delhi. It witnessed the virtual collapse of the imperial authority in Delhi which blemished for the time being all hopes of a progressive and peaceful government and led India to the destructive political and social order continued for two and half centuries. The Mughal Empire declined primarily due to political and economic crisis. The moral decay reflected both in the *harem* and society resulted in the downfall of the Mughal Empire.

Aurangzeb had been so cautious and although he had attained the age of 90, and sustained control over affairs of state to the very end but none of his sons was able to impose himself on him. At the time of his death, only three of them were left alive Muazzam, Azam and Kambakhs. He partitioned the empire among his sons and appealed to them not to engage in a fanatical war.[1] He had placed this will under his pillow and it was discovered only after his death.[2] The eldest prince Muazzam was the governor of Kabul while the second Prince Azam and the third Prince Kambaksh were in Deccan.[3] As there was no fixed law of succession among the Mughals, the question had to be decided by the sword. Prince Muazzam heard the news of the Emperor's death at Jaju and started at once for the capital. Like Prince Azam he also thought that Agra and Delhi would give him a great advantage over his rivals. Having seized Agra and appropriated to himself the vast treasures found in fort. He wrote a letter to Prince Azam asking him for a personal combat to decide the question of successions. Prince Azam replied that the question of sovereignty was quite different from personal quarrels and two swords could not remain in a single scabbard.[4] Decisive victory attended the arms of Prince Muazzam in the battle of Jaju against the forces of Azam Shah on 18 June 1708.[5] On the following day Bahadur Shah held his first public durbar in which he increased the *mansab* of Munim Khan to 7,000/7,000 *du aspah, sih aspah* and regularized his appointment to the office of *wizarat*.[6] The

[1]. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-1748)*, New Delhi: Icon Publications, 2006, p.3.
[2]. A.B Pandey, *Later Medieval India (1526-1761)*, Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1967, pp.290-91.
[3]. *Medieval India from 8th to 18th century A.D*, New Delhi: Atlantic Research division Publications, 2013, p .294.
[4]. Raj Kumar (ed.), *Nadir shah and Anarchy in India*, New Delhi: Anmol Publication, 2000, p.294.
[5]. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p.4.
[6]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-Al-Lubab*, Maulavi Kabir Al-Din Ahmed (ed.), Persian, Calcutta:

gracious Emperor even accommodated Asad Khan[7] and his son Zulfiqar Khan,[8] though they had supported Azam Shah, by appointing them *Wakil-i-Mutlaq*[9] and *Mir Bakhshi* respectively. He also defeated Kambaksh, who died in 1709. Muazzam ascended the throne under the title of Bahadur Shah.[10] Thus this war of succession came to an end the authority of Bahadur shah became certain.

Bahadur Shah I (1707-1712), at the time of accession was sixty four year old. He was a Shia by faith. He led to the development of two parties in his court, the Iranian party which consisted of the nobles like Asad khan and his son Zulfiqar Khan who professed the Shia faith and the Turani party which consisted of the powerful nobles like Chin Qulich Khan and Ghazi-ud-Din Feroz Jang who followed the Sunni beliefs of Islam. During Bahadur Shah's reign the *wazir* became the most powerful minister and the most important man in the state. Munim Khan who held that office was the chief influence over the royal mind and his counsels had more weight with him than that of other ministers. His power and functions extended beyond the authority of the revenue department; he took active part in all the campaigns fought in this period.[11]This developed political rivalry in the country and further weakened the Mughal Empire.[12] Unlike his father Bahadur Shah was flexible in state politics, but his concessions to the Maratha leaders were half-hearted, and the new boundaries were unenforceable. The Rajput chiefs of Jodhpur, Amber and Mewar had combined against the Emperor after Aurangzeb's death. Ajit Singh had recovered his territories and central provinces and expelled the Muslim *Faujdar* Mihrab Khan, Jain Singh; the prince of Amber had married his daughter to the Rana Udaipur for the purpose of strengthening the alliance. The Rajputs surrounded Jodhpur and reduced to sore straits the Muslims *Faujdar* who was allowed to retreat with honour. After a good deal of fighting, order was restored and peace was made with the Rajputs.[13]

Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1874, Part-II, pp.598-599. Also Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara,* Eng tr. by H. Beveridge, Revised by Baini Prashad, Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1979, Vol-II, Part-I, p.296.

7. William Irvine, *Later Mughals,* Jadunath Sarkar (ed.), Delhi: Low Price Publication, 1995, Reprint, 2006, Vol-I, pp.9-10.

8. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...,* Vo-II, Part-II, p.1033.

9. William Irvine, *Later...,* Vol-I, p.38.

10. *Medieval India from 8th to 18th century A.D,* p.294. Also William Irvine, *Later...,* Vol-I, p.57.

11. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...,* p.5.

12. G.S Chhabra, *Advance study in the history of Modern India, (1707-1815),* New Delhi: Sterlling Published, 1985, Vol-I, p.2.

13. *Nadir shah and Anarchy...,* p.16.

The most serious trouble Bahadur Shah had to face was the Sikhs rebellions led by their leader Banda Bahadur. In October 1708 Guru Gobind was assassinated while travelling with Bahadur Shah's army. A doubtful Sikh, Banda Bahadur, declared himself Guru, collected a strong force and cruelly sacked Sirhind and the neighboring regions. The Emperor being busy subduing the Rajputs delayed taking immediate action. The imperial army however succeeded in bringing Banda Bahadur back to Mukhlisgarh in the Punjab hills.[14] Bahadur Shah period no heed to the changing political phenomenon of the country. Consequently witty people entitled him sarcastically the *Shah-i-bekhabar*, (Heedless King).[15] Bahadur Shah's death on the 27th February, 1712, left the whole camp fall into confusion. The Emperor had barely breathed his last, before his sons were raged against each other in contest for empire, an event that was not unexpected.[16]

Jahandar Shah (1712-13), after the death of Bahadur Shah immediately followed a war of succession among the princes even before his body was buried.[17] But a powerful general, Zulfiqar Khan, the son of Aurangzeb's *wazir,* Asad Khan, formed an alliance with Azim-us-Shan three brothers against him. They agreed to partition the empire among them, with Zulfiqar Khan as their common minister. The eldest and worst of them all was Muiz-ud-Din (Jahandar Shah). While the support of Zulfikar Khan, Jahandar ascended the throne in 1713.[18] His titles were Abul Fath, Muhammad Muiz-ud-din, Jahandar Shah.[19] Zulfikar Khan, Nusrat Jang, became the chief Minister and received a *Mansab* of 8000 *Zat* and large sum of money. Ali Mardan Kokaltas Khan, who had been long in Jahandar Shah's service was given the title of Khan Jahan, and appointed to be first *Bakhshi.* The officer of *Diwan* was conferred on Ikhlas Khan, while the revenues of the *Khalsa* were entrusted to the care of Sabha Chand who was given the title of Raja. Other officers were similarly honoured and became the recipients of royal favour. The princes of the royal family

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[14]. S.A.A Rizvi, *The wonder That was India*, (A Survey of The History and Culture of the Indian Sab-Continent from the Coming of The Muslims to The British Conquest 1200-1700), Great Britain: Sedgwick and Jackson Limited, 1987, Vol-II, pp.148-49.

[15]. Khafi Khan, "Muntakhab-Al-Lubab", in *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians,* Elliot and John Dowson, London: Trubner & Co, 1877, Vol-VII, p.410. Also Sidney J. Owen, *The Fall of The Mughal Empire*, London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1912, p.128.

[16]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol-I, p.158.

[17]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol-I, p.135.

[18]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-Al-Lubab*, Urdu tr. by Muhammad Ahmad Farooqi, Karachi: Nafees Academy, 1963, Vol-IV, p.134.

[19]. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p.7.

were defeated or killed.[20] But the latter had no head for administration and as soon as he came to power, he transferred all his powers into the hands of those who had supported his cause, and himself fell into the company of revelers abandoning himself completely to wine and beautiful women.[21] He was a worthless and made himself disreputable among all sections of the people. One of his nephews, Farrukh Siyar, the second son of Azim-us-Shan wanting to take advantage of the situation, won the Saiyad brothers over to his side and marched to Delhi. His progress was easy, Jahandar Shah fled and Farrukh occupied the throne. Jahandar was later on arrested and handed over to Farrukh who had him put to death on 11th February, 1713.[22]

Farrukh Siyar (1713-1719), became Emperor of India in 1713 at the age of 27. He was a weak and worthless man. He had no experience in state affairs. He occupied the throne with the help of the Saiyad brothers and therefore gave them highest offices in consideration for the same.[23] He appointed Abdullah Khan, as the *Wazir* of his empire with the rank of 7,000/7,000 and the *subedari* of Multan; while the younger brother, Hussain Ali, the *Mir Bakshi,* was appointed the governors of Bihar respectively;[24] their uncle Muzaffar Khan was appointed the governor of Ajmer and a number of other relatives also enjoyed position in different departments of the government.[25] But his personal friends and advisers turned jealous of their power and began to play conspire against them. Among them Mir Jumla deserves special mentions.[26] Farrukh Siyar's most striking achievement was the elimination of Sikh power from the Punjab and the execution of the Sikh leader, Banda Bahadur. He was captured and cruelly hacked to death (1716).[27] The Saiyad brothers were good soldiers but they were not capable to act either as *Wazir* or as *Bakhshi-ul-Mamalik,* the principal civil and military offices they appropriated. Their financial adviser, Lala Ratan Chand, was incapable of preventing administrative and economic

[20]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol-I, p.186.
[21]. *Nadir shah and Anarchy...*, p.18.
[22]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, p.3. Also J.L Mehta, *Advanced Study in The History of Modern India 1707-1813,* New Delhi: New Dawn Press, 2005, p.11.
[23]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, p.3. Also John F.Richard; "The Mughal Empire", in *The Magnificent Mughals*, editor Zeenat Ziad, Forwarded by Milo Cleveland Beach, U.K: Oxford University Press, 2002, p.19.
[24]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Persian, Part-II, p.728.
[25]. A.B Pandey, *Later Medieval...*, p.297.
[26]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Urdu tr, Vol-IV, p.175.
[27]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, p.3.

disintegration. Consequently financial crisis accelerated the spread of the revenue farming system.[28]

Farrukh Siyar was able neither to appear before the Saiyad brothers nor to neutralize the factionalism at court. His intrigues exasperated the brother and they dethroned, blinded, and imprisoned him.[29] When he tried to get himself free from the influence of the Saiyad brothers, he was put to death. After tragic death of Farrukh Siyar, the Saiyad brothers quickly raised two young princes, Rafi-ud-Draajat and Rafi-ud-Daula [30](Shah Jahan II), who died within few months.[31]

Muhammad Shah (1719-1748), after the death of Rafi-ud-Daula, the Saiyad brothers had no difficulty in putting another puppet on the throne. His name was Sultan Roshan Akhtar, entitled as Muhammad shah.[32] His father Jahan Shah had been killed in the battle of succession against Jahandar Shah at Lahore on 27th March 1712. Since after until his accession to the throne Roshan Akhtar stayed with his mother Qudsia Fakhr-un-Nisa Begum in the royal palace at Delhi.[33] The Saiyad brothers (king-makers) sent a group of horsemen under their cousin, Gulam 'Ali Khan, son of Saiyid Khan Jahan, to Delhi to offer the crown to Prince Roshan Akhtar and escort him to their camp.[34] Qudsia Begum welcomed the proposal of the Saiyads and with marks of great joy she allowed her son to depart. He was an intelligent and handsome prince and was brought up by his mother in the fort. He was only 17years old when placed on the throne, under the title of Mohammad Shah, *Badshah* and *Ghazi* on 24 September 1719.[35] He was proclaimed to be Emperor of India and the *khutba* was recited in his name.[36] The new Emperor had to confront with a difficult situation. He was an indolent and pleasure loving king. This Saiyads continued to rule through the medium of this imperial puppet. The Saiyad brothers were still very powerful. Jafar

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[28]. A.B Pandey, *Later Medieval...*, p.295. Also Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Urdu tr., Vol-IV, pp.178-179.

[29]. *Medieval India from 8th to...*, p.295.

[30]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Persian, Part-II, pp.816, 831.

[31]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara,* Mavlavi Abdul Haii and Mavlavi Mirza Ashraf (eds), Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1891, Vol-III, Persian, p.136.

[32]. Henry George Keene, *Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Delhi: Orient Publishers, 1917, p.33. Also Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-III, Persian, p.137.

[33]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Persian, Part-II, pp, 840-841

[34]. Khan Khafi, *Muntakhab...*, Persian, Part-II, P,839-840

[35]. Yahiya Khan, *Tazkirat-ul-Muluk,* Rotograph-81, CAS Department of History, AMU Aligarh, f.128a. Also S.A.A Rizvi, *The wonder...*, Vol-II, p.149.

[36]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Persian, Part-II, p.841. Also Abdulla Anwar Beg, *Since Our Fall,* Lahore: The Alamgir Association, 1937, p.77.

Khan ruled as victorious over the provinces of Bengal, Bihar Orissa. The six provinces of the Deccan were held by Husain Ali Khan assisted by his nephew Alim Ali Khan. Ajit Singh of Jodhpur, a friend to the Saiyad, had the charge of Gujarat and Ajmer besides his own territories.[37] Malwa was occupied by Nizam-ul-Mulk, the leader of the *Turani* party. He invaded the territories of Khandesh under the control of Hussain Ali's viceroyalty. The expeditions sent against him failed. Resultantly Husain Ali himself marched against Nizam-ul-Mulk, taking the Emperor with him lest he should create some mischief behind. Abdulla Khan remained in Delhi. However, no sooner had Hussain Ali marched out of the capital than a conspiracy was hatched by Mohammad of Amin Khan, a Turani leader who was helped by Hyder Ali, the superintendent of the imperial artillery and others. Hussain Ali was murdered, the Emperor put himself personally at the head of the imperial army, appointed Mohammad Amin Khan as his *wazir* under the title of Itimad-ud-Daula, marched 1720. He defeated Abdulla Khan and imprisoned him at Bilochpur near Agra. The elder Saiyad brother died, thus the story of Saiyad brothers came to and end.[38]

The downfall of the Saiyads was a natural phenomenon. A number of reasons can be traced in this regard. They usurped the power. However, naturally liked neither by the Emperor nor by the old nobility replaced. The hostile *Irani* and *Turani* forces parties had started working against the Saiyads right from the beginning. The barbaric punishment they meted out to Farrukh Siyar and other enemies also earned them a bad name. They did not adopt the policy of liberalization and toleration towards the non-Muslim tolerated even by the orthodox Muslims. Never before in the history of the Mughals had an imperial authority that witnessed the rise of such predominating influence which could make or mar an Emperor's fate.[39] Muhammad Shah enjoyed a long rule of 28 years. With the help of some of this supporters, he got rid of the Saiyad brothers but this help cost him very dearly. His supporters soon declared their own independence. Alivardi Khan in Bengal, Sadat Ali Khan in Oudh, and Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Deccan became independent in 1739. The Mughal Empire received another shock when Nadir Shah invaded India and shook its very fundamentals. The Marathas, the Sikhs, the Jats and the Rohillahs greatly increased

[37]. S.A.A Rizvi, *The wonder...*, Vol-II, p.150.
[38]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, p.5.
[39]. *Nadir shah and Anarchy...*, p.26.

their power.[40] Owing to their activities the once mighty Mughal Empire was much reduced in its extent and came to be confined within Delhi and some of the surrounding areas. Mohammad Shah, who came to be known as Mohammad Shah '*Rangila*' an account of his love pleasure loving and merry-making nature could not save the empire from disruption. The only remains of Mughal Empire during his regain were the shadow of its glorious past. Muhammad Shah died on 15 April, 1748 giving succession to his only son Ahmad Shah.[41]

Ahmad Shah (1748-1754), after Muhammad Shah his son Ahmad Shah was enthroned.[42] He was not a man of experience, spent all his time up to manhood in the *harem* and he gave up himself to pleasure and sport.[43] The business of the state was destroyed very much into the hands of a eunuch named Jawid Khan, who had long been the favourite of the Emperor's mother, a Hindu dancer named Udham Bai. The rivalry between the *Irani* and *Turani* groups during this period became very acute. Once they are seen involved in a violent struggle in the capital itself for six months.[44] Another important historical event of this period is the foreign invasion. Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India in 1748, 1749, 1752 and captured Multan and Punjab, etc.[45] The power of Maratha also increased enormously and control of the centre over the provinces practically came to an end. During this period there was a fierce rivalry between Ghaziuddin and Safdar Jung in which Ghaziuddin finally succeeded not only in driving Safdar Jang to Awadh but even in securing the dismissal of his own kinsman Intzamuddaula in order to obtain the office of the *Wazir* for himself.[46] On 5 June 1754 Gaziuddin became the *Wazir*, assembled the nobles decided unanimously that Emperor be removed. In July 1754, Alamgir Sani, a son of Jahandar Shah was placed on the throne; Ahmad Shah having been removed was blinded and imprisoned in Salimgarh near the palace.[47]

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[40]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, p.6.
[41]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, p.6.
[42]. Z.U Malik, "Profile of a Slave Girl Munny Begam Widow of Meer Ja'afar", in *Women in Indian History (Social, Economic, Political and Cultural Perspectives)*, Editor Kiran Pawar, Patiala: Vision & Venture, 1996, p.114.
[43]. H.G Keen, *Fall of...*, pp.47-48.
[44]. *Medieval India from 8th ...*, p.296.
[45]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, p.7.
[46]. A.B Pandey, *Later Medieval...*, p.299.
[47]. *Medieval India from 8th ...*, p.297.

Alamgir II (1754-1759), he was a very weak-kneed person. During his reign the disturbances of the last reign gradually assumed alarming proportions.[48] He remained a puppet in the hands of his *Wazir* Imad-ul-Mulk. When the Emperor tried to assert himself, Imad-ul-Mulk got him killed in 1759.[49]

Shah Alam (1759-1806), after Alamgir his son Ali Gauhar became the next Emperor in 1759 under the title of Shah Alam, did not return to Delhi till 1771. When the Marathas re-established their hold on that city and invaded invited him to came to capital.[50] During his reign, Ahmad Shah Abdali once again invaded India and defeated the Marathas in 1761 in the third battle of Panipat, when they came to help the *Wazir* (Imad-ul-Mulk). In 1764, Shah Alam was defeated by the British in the battle of Buxar and therefore he had to grant the *Diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to them.[51] Hereafter the dignity of the Emperor practically came to an end and he was deprived of every privilege of staying in the capital. Later he was blinded and spent his days in great misery.[52] After his dismissed Mughal Empire had only two nominal Emperor Akbar II (1806-1837) and Bahadur Shah II (1837-1857), ruling at the mercy of the British East India Company.[53] He was allowed to hold the imperial title. Bahadur Shah II was fond of poetry and had the title of "*Zafar*". Later he participated in the rising of 1857 against the British rule and was sent away as a prisoner to Rangoon where he died in 1862. Thus the nominal rule of the Mughals ended with no successor left to be recognized by the British.[54]

The sources of the eighteenth century and modern works give details that the princes and royal women of the Mughal imperial family exercised considerable influence on the court politics of the *harem* and administration directly or indirectly throughout the period of Mughal rule, especially during the times of the later Mughals. In the Mughal period the first lady of the Emperor's *harem* was not usually the current favourite or even the senior wife. By right this place belonged to the Emperor's mother, if she happened to be alive, or to one of his aunts and sisters. After the death of Aurangzeb this position was being held by Zinat-un-Nissa Begum, the

[48]. A.B Pandey, *Later Medieval...*, p.299.
[49]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, pp.10-11.
[50]. A.B Pandey, *Later Medieval...*, p.299.
[51]. *Medieval India from 8th ...*, p.297.
[52]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...*, Vol-I, p.11.
[53]. *Medieval India From 8th ...*, p.297.
[54]. A.B Pandey, *Later Medieval...*, p.300.

only surviving daughter of Aurangzeb his last surviving consort Udaipuri having died shortly after the battle of *Jaju*. She took an active interest in the cause of her full brother Azam Shah and after his defeat refused to be reconciled to Bahadur Shah. Inspite of her partiality for Azam, Bahadur Shah had conferred on her the honorific of Padishah Begum; and further increased the *jagirs* and allowances settled on her since Aurangzeb's times.[55]There are numerous stories of dancing girls and other remarkable ladies who captivated the rulers, Jahandar Shah's affairs being a typical example.[56]

During the reign of Bahadur Shah, the two senior wives, Mihar Parwar (Mihar-un-Nissa Begum) and Amat-ul-Habib (Aziz-un-Nisa Khanum) used their instinctive wisdom to keep the *harem* on an even keel.[57] Bahadur Shah ignored the under-currents of mutual suspicion and took only their bonhomie for self-fulfillment. It is true that Mihar Parwar was one of those who did not hesitate to spread conspiracy, though it was only a small part of her character. Aziz-un-Nissa on the other hand was less circumspect and stronger willed than Mihar Parwar.[58] Both women took keen interest in the administrative affairs of the state. For instances, Ikhlas Khan, who held the post of *Arz-i-Mukarrrar,*[59] to check all petitions for high offices, the initial orders had been passed with a view to find out whether the applicants were fit for active service, and give the grounds on which their petitions had been accepted. These two leading queens Mihar Parwar and Amatul Habib and some other persons close to the Emperor started the practice of securing his signature on their applicants,[60] without referring them to Musta'id Khan for enquiry and approval. But little need was often paid to such (irregular) grants (by the revenue department). The king instructed the *Mutasaddis* (a writer or a cleark) to do what they thought was proper, without hiding his signature which, in consequence, lost his value.[61]

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[55]. G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten Mughals a History of the Later Emperors of the House of Babur (1707-1857),* New Delhi: Manohar Publisher s and Distributors, 2002, p.83.

[56]. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals, History, Art and Culture,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005. p.154.

[57]. A.B Pandey, *Later Medieval...,* p.300.

[58]. G.S Chhabra, *Advance...,* Vol-I, p.11.

[59]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...,* Persian, Part-II, pp.629-30.

[60]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...,* Persian, Part-II, pp.629-30.

[61]. Satish Chandra, *Parties And Politics At The Mughal Court (1707-1740),* New Delhi: People Publishing House, 1972, p.58.

Lal Kunwar was the daughter of Khausiyat Khan, supposedly a descendant of the legendry Tansen,[62] the great musical genius and one of the gems of the court of Akbar, Lal Kunwar came from the family of *Kalawant* (musicians). Some traces of his intelligence had filtered down, over the generations to Lal Kunwar, who was, a very beautiful lady. She became Jahandar Shah's favourite concubine at early age[63] and their mutual attachment was so deep that she was accompanied even in the battlefield. But well-brought up daughter of the *umara* strength have been expected to defer to the influence of a seventy-year old. It was too much to expect of Lal Kunwar, the former dancing girl.[64] Her hold over the Emperor's mind was strong enough to enable her to exercise great influence behind the scene. Though she was not allowed to interfere directly in any branch of the government or high matters of policy, yet the internal dissension between the *wazir,* the *Mir Bakshi* and Lal Kunwar caused numerous splits among the nobles in the royal court.[65] Such women frequently entered royal *harems* an example being Udaipuri Bai, the mother of Kam Bakhs but they were expected to know their place and stay there. In the brief reign of Jahandar, violence and debauchery had full sway. It was a fine time for minstrels and singers and all the tribes of dancers and actors. These seemed to be a likelihood that *Qazis* would turn toss-pots, and *muftis* become tipplers.[66]

After Jahandar Shah accession to the throne, Lal Kunwar was raised to the status of a queen, and even allowed to display the imperial standard and march with drums beating as if she was the Emperor in persons. Five hundred gentleman troopers (*ahadis*) followed in her train. Lal Kunwar was honoured with the title of *Imtiyaz Mahal*[67] (Chosen of the place), received a large allowance, lot of cash and jewellery from treasure that values more than 15 carors.[68] She imitated the style of Nur Jahan, the famous Queen of Jahangir. The only differences were that while Nur Jahan's relations were men of merit, Lal Kunwar's were the scum of society. All the brothers

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62. Allyn Miner, *Sitar Sarod In The 18th and 19th Centuries*, Delhi: Narendra Prakash Jain for Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1997, pp.79-80.
63. Chandra Satish, *Parties...*, p.70. Also Vinod Chand Pandey and Vinod Behari Lal (eds), *The Medieval India (1711-1803 A.D)*, Lucknow: Kendra Prakashan, 1991, p.213.
64. Faruqi Nurruddin, *Jahandar Nama*, Rotograph-71, CAS Department of History, AMU Aligarh, f.37a.
65. Gulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, as Mirat-us-Salatin, Lucknow: Published Naval Kishor, Vol-II, Urdu, p.13. Also Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, pp.8-9.
66. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol-VII, p.432
67. Faruqi Nurruddin, *Jahandar...*, f.37b. Also Saikh Muhammad Munam, *Farrukh Nama,* Rotograph-103, CAS Department of History, AMU Aligarh, f.74.
68. Faruqi Nurruddin, *Jahandar...*, f.37b.

and relatives, close and distant, of Lal Kunwar, received *mansabs* of four or five thousand, and *naubat wa naqqar* (drum).[69] One writer says the days of Nur Jahan Begum were revived for her, that coins were issued in her name as they had been in that of Jahangir's favourite wife. Such coins of Lal Kunwar, if even issued, have not come down to us.[70] The brother of Lal Kunwar, Khushal Khan, who had received a *mansab* of 5000 and 3000 horses, was entitled *subedar* of Akbarabad".[71] Contemporary writers relate a number of stories to illustrate how Jahandar Shah in his infatuation with Lal Kunwar neglected even the ordinary proprieties and decencies of behaviour, and lowered imperial dignity and prestige. She also became a channel for the transmission of imperial favour and patronage. Thus we come to know that Lal Kunwar's brother Niamat Khan was a Sarangi player, yet he was appointed governor of Multan.[72]

Jahandar Shah and his concubine, in insubordination of etiquette, often visited the markets together, seated in a bullock carriage, making at the shops such purchases as took their fancy. One night after a day spent in debauchery and in visits to various gardens round the city, they entered the house of a vegetable seller Zuhra, a friend of Lal Kunwar. There they drank till they were intoxicated. On their leaving, the woman owing the shop was rewarded with a sum of money and a grant of the revenue of a village. During the journey towards home they both fell asleep, and on reaching the place, Lal Kunwar was taken out by her women and carried to her room. The driver of the *Rath*, who had also shared in the drink, made no inspection of it and left it at the stable. The Emperor's absence began to cause alarm to the officers of the place. He was not to be found in Lal Kunwar apartments, and on her direction the *Rath* was examined. There the Emperor was found fast asleep, nearly two miles from the palace.[73] Khus hal Chand quotes applying to Jahandar Shah when he woke and knew not where he was, a drunken man is so happy that at the resurrection he asks "who am I, who are you, and what place is this"?[74]

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[69]. Faruqi Nurruddin, *Jahandar*..., f.37b.
[70]. William Irvine, *Later*..., Vol-I, p.194.
[71]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab*..., Urdu tr, Vol-IV, p.139. Also Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab*..., Elliot and Dowson, Vol-VII, pp.432-433.
[72]. Satish Chandra, *Party*..., p.71.
[73]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab*..., Urdu tr Vol-II, p.140. Also William Irvine, *Later*..., Vol.II, pp.195-96.
[74]. William Irvine, *Later*..., Vol.II, pp.195-96.

Lal Kunwar herself was the cause of an estrangement between the Emperor and his aunt, Zinat-un-Nissa Begum. The old lady of the *harem sarai*, the Padishah Begum ignored the pretentions of this hetaera and she in turn insulted her using various kinds of abusive epithets while referring to her in public. These princes had refused to visit or acknowledged the new favorite, who in her rage loaded the royal lady with the most reproachful epithets. At his mistress' instigation the Emperor ceased to visit his aunt, and refused her invitation to an entertainment, because Lal Kunwar had not been asked to it.[75] Another day Jahandar Shah and Lal Kunwar were on the roof of the palace, watching what was going on upon the river, a boat full of men crossed over, the favourite said: "I have never seen a boat-load of men go down". A hint was enough. Boatmen were ordered out with a boat-load of passengers to fulfill the favourite's wish to see the wretched drowning of people struggling in the water was at once gratified.[76]

Another incident involving a close intimate of Lal Kunwar and one of the *umara* show the *wazir* in the light of a protector of his class. The incident involved Zuhra, a friend of Lal Kunwar, she also acquired wealth and position and she went forth on an elephant with an extensive retinue whenever she went to the '*qila-i-Mualla*' to meet her 'sister'. In the palace this vulgar former vendor of vegetable enjoyed privileges hitherto permitted only to princesses. As a consequence of her sudden elevation she became exceedingly insolent and her retinue even more so.[77] Zulfiqar Khan did nothing more to appease Cin Qulich though he did on one occasion support the latter when the soldiers in his retinue clashed with the servants of Zulfiqar, Zuhra while passing through a narrow street in the town. Zuhra, it is said insulted Chin Qulich by calling him "the son of that blind man",[78] and the Khan followers related severely by belabouring the servants of Zuhra. Zuhra complained to Lal Kunwar who spoke to the Emperor. But Chin Qulich had already approached Zulfiqar Khan who sided with him, and so Jahandar Shah did not dare to take any action against him.[79]

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[75]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol.II, p.195

[76]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol.I, p.192. Also S.R.Bakhsi and S.K.Sharma (eds), *The Great Moghuls*, Later Moghuls (7), New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1999, p.108.

[77]. Gulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, as Mirat-us-Salatin, Vol-II, pp.13-14. Also G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, pp.85-86.

[78]. Satish Chandra, *Medieval India from Sultanat to The Mughals*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2004, Part-II, pp.469-70

[79]. Gulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, as Mirat-us-Salatin, Vol-II, pp.13-14

Another instance of utter abandonment of decorum was the fact that acting on the popular belief, Jahandar Shah took bath every Sunday in company with Lal Kunwar, both naked as they were born, in the tank at the shrine of Shaikh Nasir-ud-Din commonly called the '*Chirag-i-Delhi*' (lamp of Delhi), in the hope that his saintly intercession might bless them with offspring. It is necessary for attaining this object to bathe at this place naked every Sunday for four weeks.[80]

Zulfiqar Bakhshi-i-Mulk purposely made a delay of several days in the preparation of the *farman* and other deeds. Lal Kunwar complained delay to Jahandar, he asked Zulfikar Khan the reason behind the delay in the drawing out the documents. Zulfiqar Khan was very free-spoken to Jahandar, he replied, "We courtiers have got into the bad habit of taking bribes, and we cannot do any business unless we get bribe".[81] Jahandar Shah smiled, and asked what bribe he wanted from Lal Kunwar, he said a thousand guitar-players and drawing masters (*ustad-i-nakkashi*). When the Emperor asked what he could want with them, he replied, "you give all the places and offices of us to learn their trade", Jahandar smiled and the matter dropped.[82]

The hostility of Lal Kunwar to Zulfikar Khan may be attributed to a feeling on her part that the *wazir* did not pay due reference to the newly acquired dignity of her relations, and refusal to countenance their claims for the offices usually reserved for the nobly-born. This was the real cause of the increasing hostility between Lal Kunwar and Zulfiqar Khan. The emergence of these inner rivalries threw the affairs of the empire into confusion. Zulfiqar was extremely powerful, and Jahandar dared not dismiss him or oppose him openly on any issue. Hence, he resorted to secret intrigues to get rid of the *wazir*, thus creating a pernicious atmosphere which affected every branch of the administration.[83] It was quite natural for the nobles and officials to feel humiliated at the marriage of the monarch to a commoner, who moreover, belong to a despised profession, and to resent the elevation of her relations to a status of equality with them.

Also Satish Chandra, *Party and Politics,* p.77.

80. William Irvine, *Later...,* Vol.II, p.196

81. Henry George Keene, *The Turks in India,* London: W.H. Allen and Co, 1879, p.187. Also Khan Khafi, *Muntakhab...,* Urdu tr., Vol-IV, p.139.

82. Khafi, *Muntakhab...,* Elliat and Dowson, Vol-VII, pp.432-33. Also Khan Khafi, *Muntakhab...,* Urdu tr, Vol-IV, p.140.

83. Satish Chandra, *Party...,* p.73.

The author of '*Jahandar Nama*' comments that the above mentioned *Kalawantan,* trying royal jewellery on their hands, arms and drums, used to make loud noise in madness. Every night a few thousand *Kalawant* arrive at the Emperor's court, in the state of intoxication and nakedness and they danced. Some time on the hint of Lal Kunwar, they slapped on the head of the Emperor, with a loud voice Break, Break.[84] The author also comments that Emperor Jahandar Shah had seen the royalty of his grandfather and father, but he had forgotten the whole thing for Lal Kunwar. He assimilated the misbehavior and insolence of those dishonorable but did not open mouth to stop them. Moreover, he pleased them.[85] After the end of the assembly, forgetting the respect of the Emperor, playing with the *Kalawantan* he come upto the door of the tent and with many new rewards he made everyone of them wealthy.[86] They harmed the common people due to their pride and arrogance. When the Emperor went abroad to hunt or for recreation not a single noble attended, nor was he fallowed by any armed force.[87]

The author of '*Tazkirat-ul-muluk*' Yahya Khan also writes that Emperor Jahandar Shah had imprisoned two of his younger sons Izz-ud-Daula and Muizz-ud-Daula to please Lal Kunwar.[88] During his eleven months' rule, Jahandar shah showed complete indifference to the affairs of the state and administrative business.[89] The general supervision and control over the administration was exercised by the *wazir* and the *Mir Bakshi.* In the words of contemporary writer, "the Emperor's prestige was undermined and fear for him vanished from the hearts of the people".[90] The impression created on the minds of the people was that the king reigned but did not rule and that real power rested with the ministers.[91]

Another important lady of the *harem* in the 18th century was, the mother of Farruksiyar, who was invested with political and diplomatic skill and wisdom. It was she who prevailed upon Saiyad Husain Ali Khan to provide support to her son when

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84. Faruqi Nurruddin, *Jahandar...*, f.38a.
85. Khan Khafi, *Muntakhab...*, Persian Part-II, p.689.
86. Faruqi Nurruddin, *Jahandar...*, f.38b.
87. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol.II, pp.196-97.
88. Yahya Khan, *Tazkirat...*, f.119b.
89. Yahya Khan, *Tazkirat...*, f.119a. Also Zahir uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p. 9.
90. Nur-ud-Din, *Jahandar...*, f.39a. Also Zahir uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p.8.
91. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Persian Part-II, p.685.

he decided to challenge the authority of Jahandar Shah.[92] Again, when there had been a serious confrontation between the Emperor and the Saiyad brothers, she played a very important political role in effecting a rapprochement between them. She visited personally the house of Saiyad Abdullah Khan for the purpose, and in response to her persuasion he started attending court and performing his routine duties again.[93]

After the fall of Saiyad brother, Muhammad Shah increasingly came under the influence of his favourites, most of them being women and eunuchs.[94] Muhammad Shah was received at the entrance to the private apartments by his mother Fakhr-un-Nisa Begum, given the title 'Nawab Qudsia',[95] with a train of princesses and ladies of the highest distinction. The sultan *Walidah*, holding a large golden tray, filled with gold and silver coins and a variety of gems and jewels, poured the whole as a libation over his head, and she conducted within after wishing him a long and prosperous reign.[96] A sum of fifteen thousand rupees monthly was set apart for the expenses of Nawab Qudsia, and those of the other women of *harem*.[97] Saadat Khan found the Emperor cowering behind the ample skirts of Sadr-un-Nissa, the redoubtable superintendent of the *harem*.[98] Qudsia was very judicious and shrewd lady. Khafi Khan says that she surpassed all her contemporaries in dealing with the administrative problems of the empire. She exploited her opportunities in full, and never allowed anything to slip out of her hands. When Muhammad Shah was enthroned; she conferred gifts on the servants of Saiyad Abdullah Khan, the attendants and the officers of the state. When she found the Saiyad brothers failed to appreciate her gesture, she gave nothing to other hopefuls. When after a month she went from Shahjahanabad to Agra, she warned the old servants not to come to welcome and pay respects to her, lest the Saiyad brothers should take offence at any such welcom

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92. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-Al-Lubab,* Persian Part-II, p.711. Also Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture in Northern India during the Eighteenth Century*, Aligarh: 2001, p.186.
93. Seid Gholam Hossein, *The Seir Mutaqherin,* Eng tr. by Nuta Manus, Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1920, reprint, 1990, Vol-I, pp.69-70. Also Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.186.
94. Dargah Quli Khan, *Muraqqa-e-Delhi,* Eng tr by Chander Shekhar, Shama Mitra Chenoy, Delhi: Deputy Publication, 1989, p. Introduction (XXXXVI).
95. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-Al-Lubab,* Part-II, p.936. Also Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan k Musalman Hukmaran k Ahad k Tamaddni Jalway*, Azamgarh: Ma'araf Press, 1963, Urdu, p.172.
96. G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, p. 158.
97. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol-II, p.4. Also Misra Rekha, *Women In Mughal India (1526-1748 A.D)*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967, p.63.
98. G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, p.152.

being accorded to her. Similarly, in every matter she kept the like and dislikes of the two Saiyad brothers constantly in view.[99]

Muhammad Shah fully realized the possibilities of exploiting his own advantage to the prevailing atmosphere of sympathy for the house of Timur and hatred for the domineering Saiyad, he decided to spend his time waiting till the arrival of his mother (Qudsia Begum). It was with the arrival of the Emperor's mother at the royal camp near Fatehpur Sikri on 14 October 1719 that matters began to assume a different complexion. The pent-up feeling of dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs began to express itself in secret consultations and conspiracies among the nobles who were opposed to the Saiyads. The element of opposition centre round Qudsia Begum was a sagacious lady, who also possessed a talent of no mean order for undercover intrigue. Anxious to emancipate her son she quickly discovered the instruments she could employ for the purpose. She set to work with Muhammad Amin Khan, the influential leader of the Turani faction and an adept in the art of intrigue and dissimulation, to prepare schemes for the over throw of the Saiyads.[100] Muhammad Amin Khan quickly acquired great influence with Qudsia Begum and became her sole guide and friend. Whenever he got the opportunity in the court he talked with Muhammad Shah in Turkish which both knew well but other courtiers did not understand. Shah Abdul Ghafur, a shady character and necromancer of sorts, was disguised as a milk woman and carried letters and messages from the royal tent to Muhammad Amin Khan. The Mughal leader persuaded Muhammad Shah and his mother to take Nizam-ul-Mulk and explained to him in series of letters the purpose of their plans against the Saiyads for the complete ruin of Turani group.[101]

During the first two years of Muhammad Shah the Saiyad Wazir and his brother were all powerful and the Emperor a mere cipher. But after their disappearance and the sudden death of Muhammad Amin Khan, Muhammad Shah obtained a certain amount of liberty in state affairs, and in the exercise of this power Koki Jiu's voice was predominant.[102] Muhammad Shah was in hands of clever and intelligent woman Rahim-un-Nisa,[103] popularly known as Koki Jiu. She was clever and capable women, originally a Thatcher in old Delhi. Koki Jiu the foster sister

[99]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-II, p.841. Also Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.187.
[100]. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p.55.
[101]. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p. 55.
[102]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol.II, p.264.
[103]. Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.186.

(Madam) and the daughter of Mohammad Jan, geomancer Hafiz Khidmatgar Khan, a eunuch of the palace, Roshan-ud-daulah Zafar Khan of Panipat, known usually by th nickname of *'Turra-i-Bag'* (Falcon's crest) and the holy man Shah Abdul-Ghaffur.[10] He became a Muhammadan in his childhood, obtained some education in the school of his quarter, and having acquired knowledge of geomancy gained his living throug telling fortunes by the method of divination.[105] She visited the *Mahal* of the nobilit as her father's messenger and thus acquired most polished manners.

Koki Jiu entered the *harem* through her mother Qudsia Begum. Ja Muhammad had on one occasion correctly foretold the recovery of her son Rosha Akhtar from a minor illness. On another occasion he predicted that he would one da become Emperor. Some other minor predictions also turned out correct and the stoc of Rahim-un-Nisa and her father rose. Because of her charm the daughter wa particularly popular and was in high demand for writing and conveying letters c friends, relatives and former lovers in the world outside.[106] After this the princ could not bear Rahim-un-Nisa to be out of her sight. From this time forth, she becom as Koka or Koki Jiu.[107] She was employed to write letters and to act as intermediar between the Begum and her friends outside.[108]

It is claimed that during the period of her power Koki Jiu held possession c the imperial seals and was permitted to impress them on documents on Emperor' behalf.[109] On July 13, 1723, Nizam-ul-Mulk returned to the court. He foun corruption and illegal offers had increased that under the influence of Koki Jiu. Th courtiers and imperial favourites had seized the most profitable and easily manageabl *jagirs*. Even the *khalisa* land had been distributed in assignments. Her power can from a belief in her or her father's power to read futurity and prescribe the cour leading to success and fortune. Koki Jiu, her relatives and other members of the grou interfered in every administrative matter and extorted bribes for all the appointmen made on their recommendation. Ali Khan, for example, who held the office of '*Arz-Mukarrar*'[110] never, issued a letter of appointment. The *wazir* was an indolent man

[104]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol.II, p.106.
[105]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol.II, pp. 263-64.
[106]. G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, p180.
[107]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol.II, p.264
[108]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-II, p.940. Also Seid Gholam Hossein, *The Seir...*, Vol-I, p.75
[109]. Khan Khafi, *Muntakhab...*, Part-II, p.940. Also Vol-II, Urdu, pp.165-264.
[110]. Khan Khafi, *Muntakhab...*, Part-II, pp.940-1, 947, 95. Also Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.187

intemperate habits; while Muhammad Shah's only share in the government was, as one writer says, "to sit on the throne and wear the crown",[111] One day Muhammad Shah is said "if she were a man he would make her *wazir*".[112]

His authority and influence were further reduced by the dominance enjoyed at the court by Koki Jiu and her group. The Emperor hardly ever took a decision on any issue without consulting Zafar Khan and koki Jiu.[113] Zafar Khan and other advisers of the king wielded far more power than the *wazir* and other officers in matters of appointment, grant of *mansabs,* promotions and dismissals.[114] The system of peshkash at the disposal of this group had placed the means for extending and perpetuating their own power as the Emperor in desperate need of money depended always on Koki Jiu and her associates for arranging the contributions from job-seekers. The people looked towards them for recommendation and assistance in securing ranks and *jagirs*. The *wazir* who was not a link in this chain of arrangements quickly slided into the background and owing to the constant interference by the king's favourites his control over the department was far from effective.[115] Zafar Khan recommended Nasir Khan for the governorship of Kabul.[116] Similarly Muhammad Khan Bangash secured the *subedari* of Malwa in 1730 through the efforts of Koki Jiu and Zafar Khan.[117]

Badshah Begum married Emperor Muhammad Shah in December 1712, and was entitled *Malik-uz-Zamani* (Empress of the Age). She was a Mughal princess (Shahzadi), the daughter of Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar and his first wife, Fakhr-un-Nissa Begum.[118] Being a Mughal princess, Badshah Begum was well educated, intelligent and had been were instructed in the nuances of ruling and diplomacy. She bore her husband his first son, Shahriyar Shah Bahadur, who died in his childhood. After that she remained childless.[119] She also participated actively in several aspects of the state and governance and in the matters of importance such as the palace

[111]. Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab...*, Part-II, p.940.
[112]. William Irvine, *Later...*, Vol.II, p.265. Also Khan Khafi, *Muntakhab...*, Part-II, p.940. Also Vol-II, Urdu, pp. 165-264.
[113]. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, pp.87-88.
[114]. Seid Gholam Hossein, *The Seir...*, Vol-II, p.458. Also Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p.88.
[115]. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p.88.
[116]. Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maathir...*, Vol-II-Part-II, pp.1013-14.
[117]. Zahir Uddin Malik, *The Reign...*, p.88.
[118]. Gulam Husain, *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, as Mirat-us-Salatin..., Vol-II, p79. Also Rekha Misra, *Women...*, p.60. p.28
[119]. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Calcutta: S.C. Sarkar & Sons, 1932, Vol-I, p.337.

intrigues to make prince Ahmad Shah and place him on the *masnad* of Delhi.[120] Being the Emperor's chief wife, she was the most influential among all of her husband's wives and exercised her opinion him. Once the Emperor secretly planned to get *wazir* Safdarjang killed in an interview inside the fort on the plea of a private consultation Malik-i-Zamani sent a secret message to Safdarjang warning him about the treacherous plot.[121]

Itmad-ud-Daula Muhammad Amin Khan Chin Bahadur took the Queen mother and Sadrun-Nisa into their confidence about their plot to assassinate Saiyid Husain Ali Khan.[122] Saiyid Muhammad Ali Al-Husain says that Malika-i-Zaman kept the news of the demise of Muhammad Shah a top secret. She did not express any sorrow or anxiety natural to women. Swift-footed messengers were dispatched to them to inform of the passing away of the Emperor. Thus the death of the Empero was kept secret for three days. It was only after the arrival of the prince that it wa made public.[123] Malika-i-zamani had taken part directly or indirectly in several palac intrigues could not however sent word to the avenging Rohilla that she was ready to pay him Rs. 12 lakh as the price of restoring the throne of Hind to her grandson, Bida Bakht.[124]

However, during the reign of Ahmad Shah, his mother Udham Bai, took th reins of administration into her own hands. She possessed much diplomatic skill.[12] She was probably of Hindu origin and her initial name was Udham Bai. She wa presented to the imperial court as a dancer and was able to gain favour. The Emperc Muhammad Shah noticed her and she was betrothed to him as his third wife. Th Emperor placed great trust into her and her abilities. She was later appointed as Mansabdar of 50,000 armies whose main duty was to govern the empire an command the armies in the name of the Emperor, especially during his absence. Afte Muhammad Shah's death in 1748, her son Ahmad Shah Bahadur ascended the throne As a widow, she then took the title *Qudsia Begum*, alternatively also spelled *Qudsi*

[120]. B.P Shaha, *Begams Concubines and Memsahibs*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1997, p.29.
[121]. B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.29.
[122]. Khan Khafi, *Muntakhab...*, Part-II, pp.841, 850, 903. Also Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.187.
[123]. Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.187.
[124]. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of The Mughal Empire*, Calcutta: M.C.Sarkar & Sons, 1950, Vol-III, pp.268-269. Also G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, p.407.
[125]. Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.187.

Begum or *Kudsiya Begum, Hazrat Sahebuz-Zamani*[126] *and qibla-i-alam.*[127] Ahmad Shah proved however to be an ineffective ruler, strongly influenced by his mother. When a civil war broke out between the Emperor and Safdar Jang, the *wazir*, Imad-ul-Mulk made certain demands. Udham Bai was able to keep him on the side of the Emperor with tempting promises.[128] She prevailed upon Safdar Khan, who resigned his post and led a life of seclusion for the past two years, to help the Emperor in that crucial hour. Indeed she went to his house personally to procure his support.[129] During the reign of Ahmad Shah, Rahim-un-Nisa again entered into court politics as agent of Udham Bai. The author of *Tarikh-i-Ahmad Shahi* says that since she was well-versed in office work, she used to deputize for Hazrat Qibla-i-Alam, the mother, and conducted discussion with the nobles on her behalf."[130] Once she went to Neeli Chattari to transact administrative business and returned later to the imperial palace having deliberations with the *wazir.*[131]

Being puffed up with power and authority, she was instrumental in conferring high titles and offices to her generally low born upstarts relative and favourites. She was honoured a rank of 50,000 *zat*, while her worthless brother, Man Khan, a vagabond and occasional dancer by profession, to the military grade of seven thousand and horse and title of Mutqad-ud-Daulah or (Trustworthy of the Empire).[132] In fact several despicable characters that were earlier in the company or friendship of Udham Bai suddenly gained eminence and enjoyed boundless favour of the Queen-Mother.[133] The upstarts exerted their influence on the government which disgusted and demoralized the honest, upright and dedicated officials and progressive nobles. Javid Khan, the head eunuch, who in the time of Muhammad Shah had the entire management of the *harem,* and had the entrée to the women's apartment, although 50 years old,[134] could illiterate prevailed on the simple minded youth of an Emperor to appoint him *darogha,* of the *Diwan-i-Khas*, with a mansab of *shesh hazaari* (6,000).[135] Other pluralities showered on him were the intelligent department, the

[126]. Z.U Malik, *Profile of a Slave Girl...*, p.114. Also Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of...*, Vol-I, p.336.
[127]. Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan ...*, p.173. Also B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.93.
[128]. Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.187.
[129]. Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.187.
[130]. Quated in Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...*, p.187.
[131]. Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan k*, p.187.
[132]. Seid Gholam Hussain, *The Seir...*, Vol-III, p.328. Also G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, p.238.
[133]. B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.94.
[134]. B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.94.
[135]. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of...*, Vol-I, p.337.

superintendence of the elephant stables (*pilkhana*), the confirmation of grants and appointments (*Arz-i-Mukarrar*), the states of the Begums and the *diwani* of the *Khalsa* and *Tan*. Soon he was raised to the rank of a *haft hazaari* (7,000) and given the title of Nawab Bahadur along with the most exalted of the heraldic insignia that of the fish with banners, kettledrums and a fringed *palki*.[136] Javid Khan in the days of (Muhammad Shah) carried on a secret intimacy with Ahmad Shah mother, now openly governed in the realm of concert with her, contrary to the custom of all *harems* where no male domestics are allowed at night, he always remained in the women's apartment all night.[137]

The Queen and the Nawab took the whole government into their own hands and the Emperor (Ahmad Shah) had nothing left but the empty title and an empty treasury.[138] The Manupur campaign was the sum of his military experience and he had been brought up entirely in the company of women and eunuchs.[139] With her son as Emperor Udham Bai was able to play a more active role. She dreamt of emulating Nur Jahan and transacted business in person. According to her instructions, high officials had to sit down at her porch every day while seated behind a screen (*deohri*), she would discuss official matters from behind a screen through the medium of eunuchs.[140] Files and letters would be passed to her and she would have them read out. The officials strongly resented her interference, given the fact that she lacked any abilities as an administrator.[141] Her birthday used to be celebrated with unprecedented pomp and grandeur. Even the Emperor's birthday had not been celebrated with such lavishness and splendour.[142]When an economic crisis occupied Udham Bai spent rupees two crores in celebrating her birthday on January 21, 1754.[143] The Nawab Imad-ul-Mulk reached Delhi in 1754 and had the Emperor and his mother arrested and imprisoned.[144] She probably died shortly after in imprisonment, the exact date being unknown. Her exact burial place is also unknown.

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136. G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, pp.238-39. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of...*, Vol-I, p.338.
137. Tarikh,-i-Ahmad Shah, in *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Eilliot and John Dowson, London: Trubner & Co, 1877, Vol-VIII, pp.113-114.
Lal K.S, *The Mughal Harem*, New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988, p.195.
138. *Tarikh,-i-Ahmad Shah*, Eilliot and John Dowson..., Vol-VIII, p.113.
139. G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, p.236.
140. B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.96.
141. B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.96.
142. B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.93. Also Sayyid Sahabuddin Abdurrahman, *Hindustan ...*, p.173.
143. B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.97.
144. B.P Shaha, *Begams...*, p.98.

Udham Bai had some redeeming qualities. Her love and attachment for her son was real and she was kind and charitable. Moved by the miserable plight of the impoverished salatin, she had regular allowances fixed for the first time for them. Many poor and indigent people living outside the palace were also the grateful beneficiaries of her charity. But the senior wives of the late Emperor, the nobly-born Malik-i-Zamani and Sahiba Mahal, were ignominiously sent to the widows' house with no special provision for their comfort.[145] She was not the woman to forget a humiliation easily. She set up a rival court in her *deohri*, sitting behind a latticed screen, listening petitions and complaints and passing orders.

Qudsia Begum is considerably best known for her palace and garden complex, *Qudsia Bagh* (Figure No.3.1). The gardens on the banks of the Yamuna were built in c.1748.[146] The Palace and other buildings in the garden have disappeared, but late eighteenth-century engraved of its riverside façade indicates its splendour and size. Inscribed: *naqsha-i qudsiyya bagh dar ... vali 'ahd bahadur. 'amal-I Mazhar* 'Ali Khan. The Qudsia Bagh (Pure Chaste) or Garden, is situated immediately in the environs and to the North of the city. Formerly a splendid palace is now left dilapidated and neglected.[147] It belongs to the heir apparent in the time being. She was however, a highly cultured woman. In any event, this ornamentation is simply a more exuberant expression of that developed under the earlier Mughals.

During her son's short reign, Qudsia Begum provided a second mosque, with Javid Khan, in 1750-51. It is known as *sunahri* mosque after its once metal-plate domes (Figure No.3.2).[148] Located along the main road just south of the palace, the compound is entered by a red carved stone gate. The red stone mosque is small and delicate, though flanked on either side by extremely tall minarets. The bulbous domes emphasized the mosque's height, giving the small building a grandiose air. It is decorated with more subdued ornament.

[145]. G.S Cheema, *The Forgotten...*, p.239. Also Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of...*, Vol-I, p.166.
[146]. Catherin B.Asher, *Architecture...*, pp. 303-4
[147]. Catherin B.Asher, *Architecture...*, p. 303.
[148]. Cathierin B.Asher, *Architecture...*, pp. 303-4.

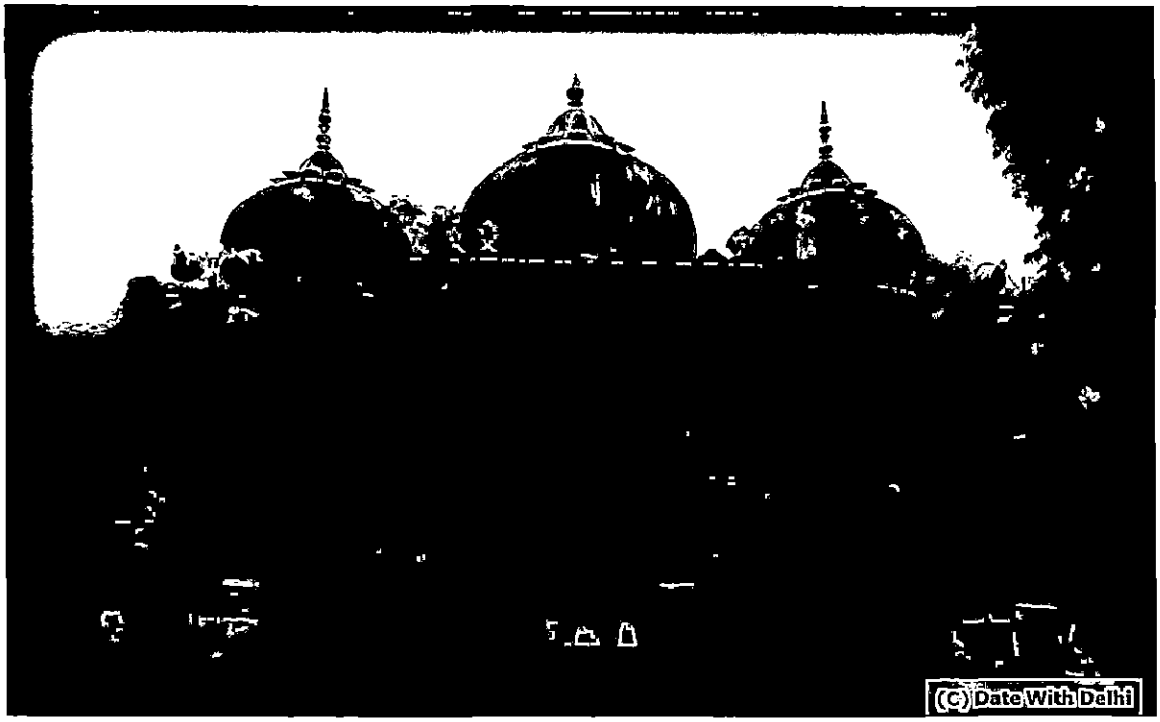

Figure No.3.1: Qudsia Bagh Mosque, https:// adatewithdelhi.wordpress.com

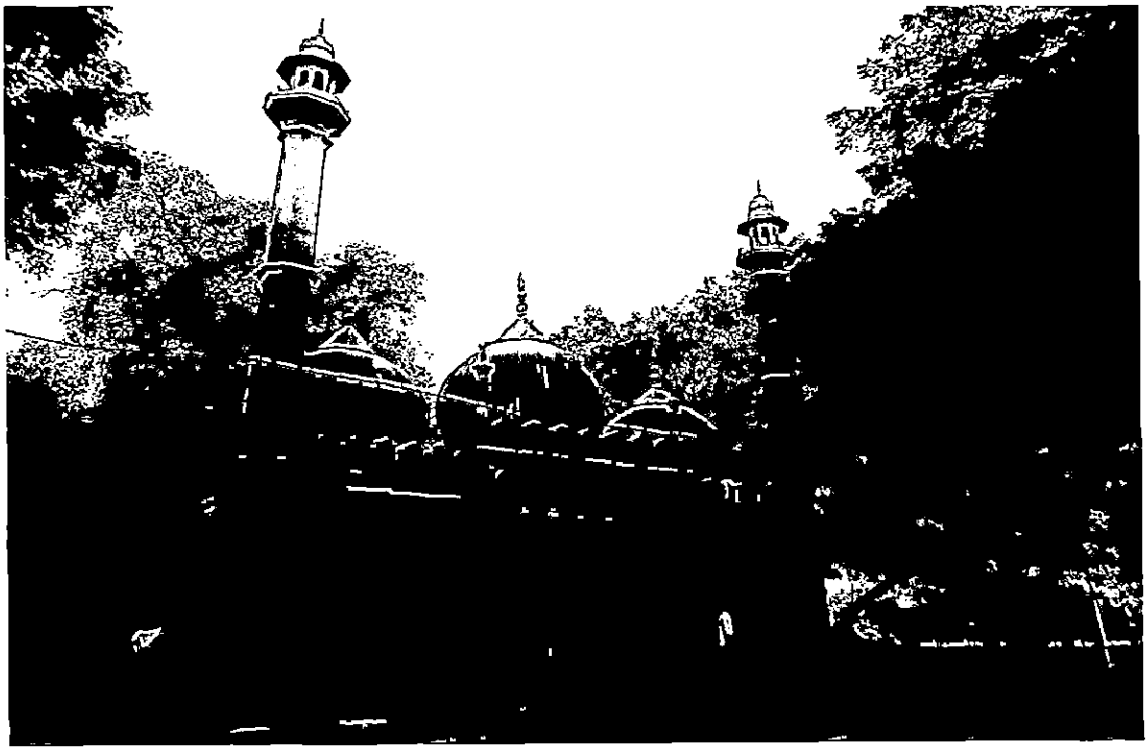

Figure N.3.2: Mosque of Qudsiya Begum and Javid Khan, know as the Sunahari mosque. http://www.panoramio.com

Besides the *Sunahri* mosque she built several structure at a Shia shrine know as Shahi Mardan in Delhi, about 9 km south of the walled city.[149] During Muhamma Shah's reign Mughal military and political glory declined rapidly, but music reached a new peak. The Emperor often performed himself, being expert in both singing an dancing.[150]

The building called Fakhr-al-Masjid, or pride of the Mosque, provided by a noblewoman. During the reign of Muhammad Shah was built in 1728-29 by Kaniz-i Fatima entitled *Fakhr-i-Jahan* (Pride of the world), to commemorate her decease husband shuja-at Khan, a high-ranking noble under Aurangzeb (Figure No.3.3).[15] Situated on a high plinth, it is one of the few stone mosques built in Delhi during th eighteen and nineteenth centuries. Most of this mosque too, had been provided by th court ladies. The names Fakhr-i-Jahan is attributed to this mosque due to its heigh tall minarets, the delicate inlay and carved niches of its interior recalling the Sha Jahan's earlier religious architecture.[152]

During the reign of Shah Alam, a dreadful account of the unfortunate fate o Shah Alam and his family; the poor king blinded ten days later in a fit of senseles passion because the expected treasure had not been discovered in palace. Jonatha Scott had given the information about Shah Alam family in his Delhi News Pape Especially, he had given such information about the women positions during the tim [153] the women of the *harem* were stripped, beaten and a number of them died fro hunger. Several threw themselves over the ramparts of the palace and were drowne in the Jamuna. The floors of every apartment in the citadel were dug up, every articl seized, even to the posts of the kitchens. The new King Bedar Shah was not allowed change of raiment and was obliged to beg for a rupee to buy a meal for Golam Kad who refused to see him when his Majesty went on foot to beg an interview.[1

[149]. Catherin B.Asher, *Architecture...*, pp. 304-5.
[150]. S.A.A Rizvi, *The wonder...*, Vol-II, pp.306-307.
[151]. Catherin B.Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India*, The New Cambridge History of India,1:4, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 298.
[152]. Catherin B. Asher, *Architecture...*, p.298.
[153]. Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughals*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1951, pp.27-28. Also Jonathan Scott, *History of Deccan From the First Muhammadan Conquests*, London: From John Stockdale, Piccadilly, 1794, Vol-II, pp.285-303.
[154]. Percival Spear, *Twilight...*, p.28.

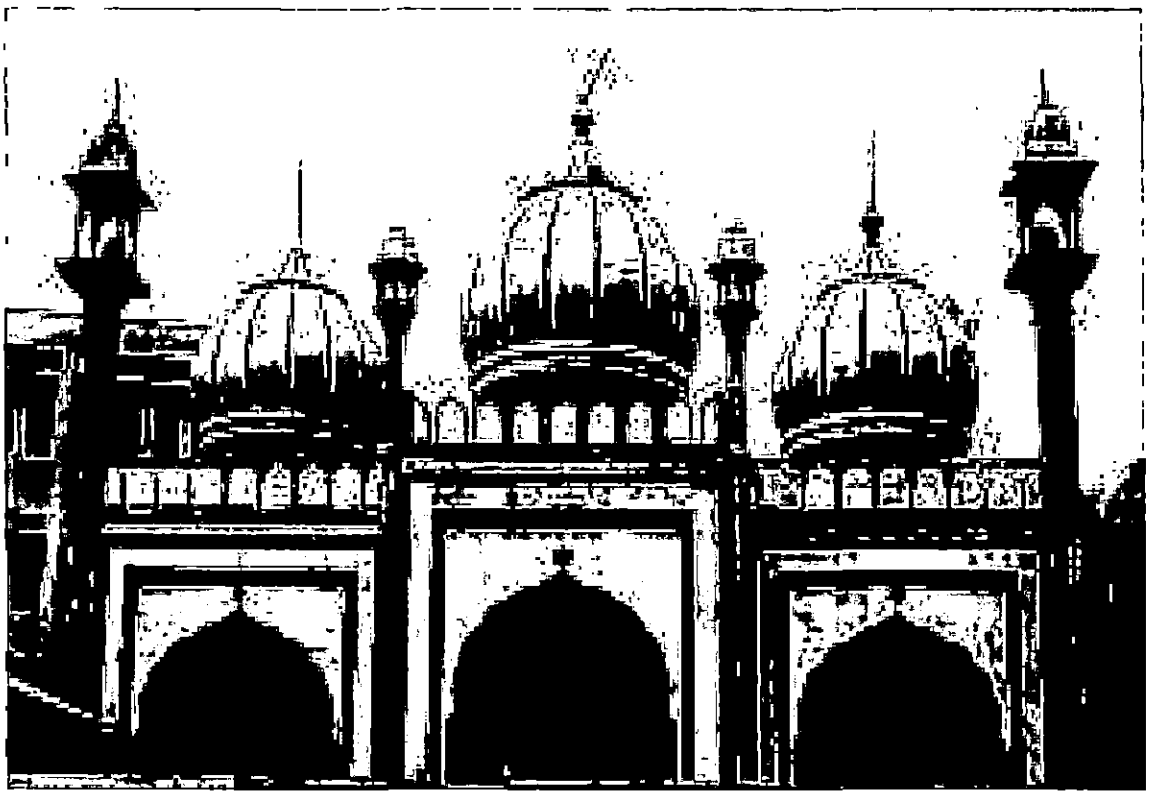

Figure No.3.3: Fakhr al-Masjid, Delhi, https://www.flickr.com

The old queen of Muhammad Shah, *Malika-i-Zamani* and Sahiba Nihal, who had seen Delhi in its utmost splendour before the invasion of Nadir Shah lived for more than twenty years in a manner entirely secluded from the world. As they were known, not only very rich, but to possess considerable influence over the royal family, they were know ordered to court, and on their arrival, directed to visit the *harem,* persuaded the females confined there quietly to deliver up their jewels and valuable effects.[155] Shah Alam was seven days without any food but coarse bread and water. No fire was kindled in the kitchen of the *harem* for three days and one day "the princesses could bear starvation no longer and in frantic disregard of the *purda* rushed out of the palace to the city; but the fort gates being closed they sat down in the men's quarters for a day and a night, after which they were convinced to go back to their rooms".[156]

After the death of Shah Alam, his surviving eldest son Akbar II ascended the throne. He was a very different man from his father. He was poorly endowed in mind and leaned much upon his women who became during his reign the real directors of policy. The chief of these were Qudsia Begum, the king's mother Mumtaz Mahal, his favourite wife and Daulat-un-Nisa Begum, his paternal aunt. The ladies attended his conferences in the resident, seated behind the curtain. They took an active part in the conversations.[157]

Ladies of the imperial *harem* have been criticized by the chroniclers for their dirty and selfish role in the politics of the time even during the most critical days of the Mughal Empire. Every queen conspired to get her son or stooge seated on the throne and to attain this objective they entered into secret alliances with the enemies of the imperial house. For instance, Malik-i-Zamani, the daughter of Farrukhsiyar and the wife of Muhammad Shah, sent him a message saying that if he raised Bedar Bakht, the son of Ahmad Shah, to the throne, she would pay him ten lakh rupees.[158] Emperor was ignorant of the real state of affairs of the government. The army was ineffective, the treasury empty and the nobles started behaving independently seeing the weakness of Emperor and authority. Thus the social, political, economic and moral degradation paved the way for the decadent empirical collapse. In brief, the

[155]. W. Francklin, *The History of Shah Alam,* New Delhi: Classical Publication Janakpuri, 1979, p.183.
[156]. Percival Spear, *Twilight...,* p.28. Also Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Calcutta: M.C.Sarkar & Sons, 1950, Vol-II, p.26-27.
[157]. Percival Spear, *Twilight...,* p.41.
[158]. Muhammad Umar, *Urban Culture...,* p.188.

vulgarities of the *harem* vulgarized the entire tone of the court, society and administration. The queen or concubine became all important in the palace and outside.

Conclusion

The retrieval of information from the foregoing chapters concludes the life-style, activities, achievements and social, economic, political and cultural contributions made royal Mughal ladies to their empire since Akbar's reign to 18th century India. Royal Mughal ladies led an enviable life in the grand apartments were luxuriously furnished with gardens, fountains, tanks and water channels. A number of officers and staff had accommodation allotted to them by the Emperors inside the *harem*. The *harem* staffs were paid handsome salaries. The *harem* was strictly guarded and no outsiders were allowed to enter the Mahal without prior permission of the authority concerned. The *harem* ladies were governed by strict rule of *purdah* and seclusion. These women rarely and hardly needed to go out of the palace, but when they came out their faces were well covered behind veils. Inside the *harem* they moved free in and liberal environment. The lavish lifestyle of the Mughal ladies, apart from their grand living apartments and delicious dishes of food, included the wearing of gorgeous dress and exquisite ornaments. On the whole the Mughal ladies lived amidst splendour and comfort.

The pleasures of the *harem* were not only for the authority of the Mughal Emperors the nobles also had their own *harem* generally designed on the same patterns. All the nobles practically followed the same methods as the Emperor. They enjoyed and maintained strict supervision over the inmate of the *harem*, although some minor differences can be enlisted amongst the *harem* of Emperors and the nobles. The Emperor's *harem* building was constructed of fine and expensive materials. The Mahal of a few great nobles were also an epitome constructed of fine architecture with stone and marbles like those of the king but majority of the mansions of nobles were also recorded as inferior to king's palace in terms of design and material used there in. The houses of most nobles and *mansabdars* built with less durable materials. Some of them had only mud walls and thatch roofs. The noblemen followed the same pattern of the imperial *harem*, administration and staff. The interiors of their *harems* were guarded by lady guards and exterior was under the well-equipped male guards. Thus the noble's ladies inside the *harem* received in splendour and luxury, enjoying all worldly pleasures in their own quarters.

During the period under review, female education was not imparted equally to upper and lower classes. Only the ladies within the fort walls of the houses were imparted education of recitation of the holy Quran. The *maktabs* and *khanqah* were

sole centers to provide education to females at the primary level. The upper class of society made elaborate and proper arrangement for the education of their women through appointment of the tutors for the purpose. Royal ladies like Maham Anaga, Gulbadan Begum, Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahan Ara, Roushan Ara, Zeb-un-Nisa and some others were role model for royal ladies at the court. They were not the product of a society that ignored the education of its womenfolk. After the demise of Aurangzeb in the 18th century Mughal princesses maintained their interest in poetry, but we do not find any remarkable Academic and literary work to be attributed to them. Even though few women got higher education but in most cases the education was limited to the primary level alone. Inside the *harem* attention was paid not only to female education but also to make them proficient in arts.

Royal ladies also the keenest interest in other forms of creativity; like cooking, embroidery, dress designing, decoration, painting, music, perfumes and they contributed in these fields. Their contribution in the field of architecture has been lavishly praised. Many of them showed not only deep but spent worth-mentioning amount of personal allowances in the construction of beautiful monuments, exotic garden tombs, mosques, market places, step wells, etc. Mughal lady also played major role in the development of trade & commerce participating actively in this field and maintaining the professional ethics. They invested significant wealth in trade and commerce and were rewarded with rich profits. The sole source of their contribution in economic activities had been their own *Jagirs.* They remained engaged in trade through their *vakils* and representatives. The construction of caravanserais, market places and ownership of the trading ships highlights these royal ladies' awareness of the nexus between trading facilities and availability of the market place.

Ladies of the18th century in imperial *harem* have been criticized by the chroniclers for their dirty and selfish role in the politics of the time, even during the most critical days of the Mughal Empire. Every queen conspired to get her son enthroned and to attain this objective they come into secret alliances even with the enemies of the imperial house. After the accession of Jahandar Shah Lal Kunwar was raised to the status of a queen moral degradation reached its climax. The author of *Jahandar Nama* comments that the *Kalawantan,* trying royal jewellery on their hands, arms and drums, used to make loud noise in madness. Every night a few thousand *Kalawant* reached at the Emperor's court, in the state of intoxication and nakedness

and they danced. Some time on the hint of Lal Kunwar, they slapped on the head of the Emperor, with a noise break, break.[1] The author also comments that although the Emperor Jahandar Shah had witnessed the royal grandeur of his grandfather and father, but he had abandoned shamelessly everything for Lal Kunwar. He digested all the misbehavior and demeaning of those disgraceful silently. The hold of law was weakened, there was no longer any restraint: and the habit of the court was seemingly. The status of the Emperor turned approximately zero as when the Emperor once went abroad to hunt or for recreation neither a single noble attended him nor he was fallowed by any armed force.

The Emperor Jahandar Shah was so infatuated with Lal Kunwar that he did not hesitate to imprison his two younger sons to please her. During his eleven months' rule, Jahandar shah was completely oblivious the affairs of the state and administrative business. The general supervision and control over the administration was exercised by the *wazir* and the *Mir Bakshi*. Consequently "the Emperor's prestige was undermined and fear for him vanished from the hearts of the people". The imprint left on the minds of the people was that the king reigned but did not rule, and the real power rested with the ministers. The author also maintained that every rank was engrossed in the amusement of dance and music, while common people were suffering from the loss of life and property at the hand of *Kalawantan.* The ban on the unlawfulness according to *shariat* had completely disappeared. Every rank from Emperor to soldiers and from *faqir* to *wazir* was indulged in forbidden act. Gradually the socially and politically oblivious state of the royal court resulted in royal devaluation.

During the reign of Ahmad Shah the change of administration and the control of Government affairs were handed over to his mother Udham Bai. She was endowed with much diplomatic skill. The army was left ineffective, the treasury remained empty and the nobles started behaving independently witnessing the weakness of Emperor. The economic growth was crushed down, the financial situation was pathetic, and the imperial kitchen was affected and occasionally went without cooking but Udham bai's birthday was celebrated with unprecedented pomp and grandeur. Even the Emperor's birthday had not been celebrated with such luxury and splendour. Strangely enough even in such an economic crisis, Udham Bai spent rupees two

[1]. Faruqi Nurruddin, *Jahandar Nama*, Rotograph-71, CAS Department of History, AMU Aligarh, f.38a.

crores in celebrating her birthday on January 21, 1754. Nevertheless, the participation of royal Mughal ladies is noteworthy. The ladies attended conferences with the residents, seated behind a curtain and took an active part in the conversations. In 18th century women not only participated in politics and administration but also gardening and building construction, for example Qudsiya Begum built a mosque, garden and another lady Fakhr-i-Jahan also constructed.

The Emperor had practically lost all power and vigour to chastise the rebels, maintain law and order and organize a formidable army to assert his authority. Frankly speaking the imperial authority had been functioning virtually within four walls of the city of the former Shahjahanabad. Although majority of people were suffering from poverty and distress. In nutshell, the eighteenth century was a period of political uncertainties for Mughal Empire which affected badly not only *harem* but the whole country as well.

Glossary

Ahadis:	Cadre of high-status cavalrymen employed directly by the emperor.
Amari:	A canopied seat on an elephant, a litter borne by a camel
Arz-i-Mukarrrar:	Confirmation of an order (for appointment, promotion, etc.) by reporting the order to the Emperor a second time.
Ashrafs:	A person of noble birth, noble man.
Bakhshi:	A paymaster
Bakhshi-ul-Mamalik:	Commander in chief
Baoli:	A deep step well, found especially in western India.
Bazigars:	A rope dancer
Caravanserai:	Inn for travellers and merchants and their beats of burden
Chikan Dozi:	An embroiderer, a worker of flowers in muslin
Diwani:	A courtier, the officer or jurisdiction
Dhurpad:	Types of classical vocal music
Du-ashiyana:	A Kind of tent
Du aspah:	A trooper with two horses and receiving higher pay than the ordinary of a diwan.
Faujdar:	Mughal officer given military and executive responsibility in a fixed area.
Ghazals:	Type of song with Urdu text
Gulalbar:	Outer enclosure of the Emperor's own residential tents.
Hukms and nishans:	Order by a princess or prince
Jagirs:	A tenure in which the revenues of specified territories were made over to a Jagirdar.
Kalavant:	Historical south Asian term for master musician
Kanchanis:	A dancing girls, by caste as well as profession
Kaniz:	A female slave, maid servant

Kanjaris:	A low class of people, who live by making and selling strings of hemp and cotton.
Khalsa:	Territories administered directly by the government
Khan Saman:	A house-steward, whose business is to furnish and regulate.
khawas or paristar:	A servant, slave male or female
Khawasspura:	Quarter for attendants
Khajawahs:	A camel's saddle; a kind of camel's litter in which females travel.
Khula:	A divorce granted at the request of the wife.
Khutba:	The royal titles as proclaimed from the pulpit before prayers.
Kimkhab:	Silk fabric with ground work of gold threads woven with three to seven layers of warp threads.
Misqals:	A smooth shell or anything used in polishing; a polishing instrument.
Masnad:	A throne, a royal of imperial throne
Mir Bakhshi:	High-ranking officer reporting directly to the emperor in charge of military pay, inspections, recruitment, and intelligence.
Mutasaddis:	A writer, a cleark
Naqqara:	West Asian bowl-shape drum, usually stick-played
Nats:	A dancing-girl, as actress
Naubat:	west Asian military band and imperial herald ensemble of wind and percussion Instruments.
Omrahs:	Those Mansabdars who held the rank of one Hazari or two Hazari or any higher rank up to 12,000 were known as the Omrahs.
Pargana:	A district, a division of a province so called also pargina

Paristar:	(1) servant-girl, (2) concubine, sometimes also married wife
Parwanas:	Messenger
Phulkari:	A florist, alkaline efflorescence used to adulterate culinary salt
Qazi:	A judge who administers Islamic law.
Raginis:	Term for melodic mode in the raga-ragini classification system for modes.
Ragas:	Melodic mode
Rubais:	A four-letter word; a verse of four hemistichs.
Sanads:	A great document conveying rights to revenue from the land
Sarai:	A building for the shelter and accommodation of travellers.
Shab-i-Barat:	The fourteenth night of sha 'ban
Subedari:	Viceroyalty; captaincy
Tafta:	Velvet or silken fabric where warp & weft yarns are different. Fabric shows reflection of each colour.
Talas:	Small hand cymbals used for dance/ musical meter
Tambourine:	Percussion instrument resembling a shallow drum; one side covered with parchment.
Wakil-i-Mutlaq:	Paramount regent, invested with full power of the empire
wizarat:	The dignity of vizer or privy counseller
Wazir:	Counselor of state, minister
Zat:	Personal rank of the officer bestowed by the Mughal Emperor

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